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Beyond All That We Ask Or Think

JOHN 14:12-14

Introduction

1. There are three verses in John 14 that I would like for us to examine this evening.
2. These are among the most interesting verses we find in God's Word.
3. I say this because Jesus spoke about His disciples doing "greater works" than He did while here upon this earth.
4. He also tells them, not once but twice, whatever they ask in His name, He will do it.
5. Have you ever stopped to ask yourself exactly what Jesus meant by these statements? What do they mean for us today?
6. Tonight, let's spend our time drinking deeply from God's Word in order to better understand that which is available to us as servants of our Lord.

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"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it." (John 14:12-14, NASB95)

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I. Doing Greater Works Than Our Lord

A. A PROMISE TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN CHRIST

"... he who believes in Me" (v. 12a)

1. Jesus has been appealing to His disciples for faith.
2. He first said, “Do not let your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in Me” (John 14:1).
3. Then after telling Philip that those who had seen Him had seen the Father (v. 9), Jesus asked, “Do you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?” (John 14:10).
4. In verse 11, we find Him saying, “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.”
5. Now, here in verse 12, Jesus says to the eleven, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also.”
6. Through all of this, the focus is upon the fruitfulness that *anyone who has faith* in Jesus will enjoy.
7. His promise staggers our minds — Jesus said that the person who has such faith . . .
 - a. *will do what I have been doing* — “he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also.”
 - b. *will do* “greater works than these” (i.e., the works Jesus did).

Slide 4**B. WHAT ARE THE GREATER WORKS?**

“. . . the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do” (v. 12b)

1. But what are these “greater works?”
 - a. Does he mean that you and I as Christians will do more thing than He did because we have a much longer period of time in which to do them?
 - b. Does he mean ‘more spectacular’ or ‘more supernatural’ works than He did?
 - 1) It is hard to imagine works that would be more spectacular or

supernatural than the raising of Lazarus from the dead, the multiplication of the loaves and fish or the turning of water into wine.

2. Jesus is about to return to His Father, He is about to be glorified.
 3. In the prayer which Jesus will pray to his Father just before He and the disciples leave the upper room, Jesus prays . . .
 - a. “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You” (John 17:1).
 - b. “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was” (John 17:4-5).
 4. As a result of His glorification, Jesus followers will know and make known all that He is and does.
 5. Everything they do and say will belong to the new covenant age which will have dawned.
 6. It was only after Jesus went back to the Father that the apostles were empowered by the Holy Spirit to do the great miracles which we find recorded in Acts:
 - a. Peter’s healing of the lame man by the temple gate (Acts 3:1-8).
 - b. Peter’s shadow falling on the sick and healing them (Acts 5:12-16)
 - c. His raising of Tabitha from the dead (Acts 9:36-41).
 - d. While Paul was in Ephesus, handkerchiefs or aprons, used by Paul in his tent making were carried to the sick so that “the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out” (Acts 19:11-12).
 7. However, these miracles were not greater than the miracles which Jesus did during His ministry.
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8. It is more likely that the greater works to which Jesus is referring are those works accomplished through the church because of Jesus’ death, resurrection

and exaltation:

- a. Three thousand souls were added to the church follow Peter's preaching on the Day of Pentecost.
 - b. From that point on, the church continued to grow "in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).
 - c. By the time Paul penned his letter to the Christians in Colosse, he said the gospel had been "proclaimed in all creation under heaven" (Colossians 3:23).
9. Think of all those who have heard and obeyed the gospel, the world over, since our Lord ascended back to His Father.
10. These make up the great multitude of which John was a witness, which according to him "no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes" (Revelation 7:9).

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II. Why Is This Possible?

A. "BECAUSE I GO TO THE FATHER" (v. 12C)

1. When Jesus spoke of the one who believes in Him being able to do greater works than those which He had done, He was not pointing to a contrast between His works and those of His disciples.
2. No, He was speaking of the difference between the works which He had performed during the time of His ministry here on earth and the works which He performs through His disciples after His death and exaltation.
3. Now that Jesus is restored to the glory which He had with the Father before the world began, He is no longer limited by His human nature.
4. He is now able to empower and equip His disciples for even greater ministry through His gift of the Holy Spirit.

5. It is because of the power of the Holy Spirit, working within us, that God is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think.
6. It is because Jesus has returned to His Father that we have the Spirit made available to us.

Slide 6**B. "WHATEVER YOU ASK IN MY NAME, THAT WILL I DO" (v. 13)**

"If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it" (v. 14)

1. Not only is it because Jesus has ascended back to His Father and made the Holy Spirit available to us that we are able to do these greater works.
2. It is also because we ask in Jesus' name.
3. Twice, Jesus tells us to ask in His name and that "whatever" we ask in His name, He "will do it."
4. Some use this verse in order to proclaim a "health/wealth" gospel, which teaches people to "name it and claim it" in prayer (i.e. " I want a million dollars," "I claim a new car in the name of Jesus," "Heal me of this terrible disease.")
 - a. In 1 Timothy 5:23, Paul told Timothy to "use a little wine" for his frequent stomach problems.
 - b. In 2 Timothy 4:20, Paul said that he left Trophimus sick at Miletus.
5. To ask something in Jesus' name is not to use His name as some kind of magical incantation, nor is it some simple formula we add to our prayers.
6. No. Prayer in Jesus' name is one offered in accordance with all that His name stands for as the divine Son of God — His person, character, will and power.
7. It is not prayer for personal revenge or personal ambition in Jesus' name.

Slide 7**B. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF OUR ASKING?**

". . . so that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (v. 13b)

1. The purpose of our asking in the name of Christ is so that the Father will be glorified in or by the Son.

2. In 2 Corinthians 12:7, Paul tells us about a thorn in the flesh which he had been given.
3. Three times he pleaded with the Lord to take it away from him, but it remained. Why?
4. I think there are two reasons:
 - a. First, Paul said that this thorn in the flesh was given to him to keep him from “exalting” himself.
 - 1) When we exalt ourselves, we don’t exalt or glorify God.
 - 2) Peter said that “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5).
 - 3) James said the same thing and then added, “Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you” (James 4:10).
 - b. The second reason the Lord allowed the thorn to remain is as He said, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).
5. Our Lord’s desire is always to glorify His Father.
 - a. The salvation of a loved one or an enemy of the gospel (i.e. Saul (Paul))
 - b. That the gospel reach those around the world who haven’t yet heard it.
 - c. Healing for a troubled marriage.
 - d. The spreading of His light throughout this community through the work we are doing.
6. When you or I ask for something, even in Jesus’ name, which does not glorify His Father, we are working against Him.

Conclusion

1. As we conclude our lesson tonight, I want to leave you with this thought and a

challenge.

2. First, the thought, because Jesus has gone back to His Father, there exists the potential within this congregation to do even greater things in the future than was done by those who worshiped here a generation ago.
3. Why? Because we believe in our Lord.
 - a. He glorified His Father by giving His life to save us from our sins.
 - b. He is now in heaven, seated at His Father's right hand.
 - c. When we ask in His name for those things which bring glory to His Father, He will do it.
4. Now, the challenge:
 - a. Let's make it our goal to work in so teaching and influencing those who follow us that they accomplish even greater works than we have by the time our Lord calls *us* home.
 - b. Let's pray continually that God will bring even greater glory to Himself through what He allows us to do here in our community.