

INTRODUCTION

When the railroads were first introduced to the U.S., some folks feared it would be the downfall of the nation. Here's an excerpt from a letter by Martin Van Buren, Governor of New York to President Andrew Jackson: "As you may know, Mr. President, 'railroad' carriages are pulled at the enormous speed of 15 miles per hour by 'engines' which, in addition to endangering life and limb of passengers, roar and snort their way through the countryside, setting fire to crops, scaring the livestock and frightening women and children. The Almighty certainly never intended that people should travel at such breakneck speed." (January 31, 1829)

This was an astronomical transition and change of pace that was taking place in America at the time. To say this season is a season of change would be redundant and would be an understatement. In John 14, the disciples were experiencing a lot of the anxieties you and I are facing today. They were uncertain in their interpretation of Jesus' words. They were uncertain in their speculation of what was to come. They were scared on multiple levels. Jesus claimed to have everything under control, yet it seemed as if their world was collapsing around them—to say the least, there was tension in the air. The eleven were in need of much encouragement and as the disciples continued to press Jesus with questions, it led to further teaching on what was about to come to the disciples.

John 14:12-26 CSB: "Truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."

"If you love me, you will keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive him because it doesn't see him or know him. But you do know him, because he remains with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live too. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you. The one who has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. And the one who loves me will be loved by my Father. I also will love him and will reveal myself to him."

Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it you're going to reveal yourself to us and not to the world?" Jesus answered, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. The one who doesn't love me will not keep my words. The word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me.

"I have spoken these things to you while I remain with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you."

In John 14:1-6, Jesus told his disciples He was preparing a place for them and He was going to return to them some day and take them to the place. Jesus was talking about leaving them. He was talking about things that are inevitably causing a disruption in their understanding of Jesus' plan. So this is what they are hearing and in just hours before Jesus will be arrested and taken away for His death. Jesus has been telling the disciples, I am leaving and I am about to go away. Of course, the disciples are disheartened by this news but Jesus begins to back fill their anxiety with hope. Essentially Jesus tells them, "However, I am going to give you something and you are going to do greater works than what you have seen." Jesus takes the truth and comforting promises from a distant future to a near future. The distant future is heaven, I am going to prepare a place for you and I will come back and get you and this left a breach in their confidence. What are we to do until our room is ready in our forever dwelling place?

I. TRUE DISCIPLES WILL ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS.

In the middle of the anxiety and uncertainty, Jesus tells them they are going to accomplish great things. "Truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12 CSB) When the disciples first heard this, I am sure their minds began racing. "Surely, this cannot be true!" The disciples who are in need of comfort and the statements of Jesus' disappearance are most likely not providing it.

How are they going to accomplish great things when Jesus is leaving them stranded? But Jesus doesn't leave it there, He said they would do even greater things. Jesus said, "the one who believes," which is a promise that extends through the apostolic age. It does not end with the disciples, it does not end with the apostles but the statement is to you and to me and to ALL who believe. And so this should cause us to ask: When Jesus says greater things, what could he possibly be meaning? How are they and how are we going to accomplish greater things?

At this point in the gospel of John, we have already seen Jesus turning water into wine in John 2. He read the mind of the woman of Samaria in John 4. He healed the official's son later in John 4. He healed a man who was crippled for more than 38 years in John 5. Then in John 5 he fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. He walked on water in John 6. He healed a blind man in John 9 and raised Lazarus from the dead in John 9. But Jesus helps the disciples clarify the works by giving them the purpose of the works. "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." (John 14:13-14 CSB)

If we want to do great things, then we must petition the Lord.

A. We must petition the Lord.

Jesus says, *ask anything* twice. He says, whatever you ask and then He says ask anything. But Jesus is very clear though, He says, "in my name." Many times when we hear this verse, we have a tendency to believe in a license to do whatever we want as if it is some sort of magic trick. However, Jesus is not teaching a type of pagan sorcery, He is teaching divine alignment.

It is this verse out of context that you and I could be brought to a conclusion of prosperity based on a formula: If I have faith + If I say in Jesus' name + If I do this = Then it will be given to me. The essence of the works Jesus is referring to is not about the work itself, but about the person the work is pointing to. When you ask in Jesus' name, it is an alignment to Jesus' will. When you say in the name of Jesus you are identifying with aligning with the person of Jesus and the purpose of Jesus. That is what it means to pray and ask in the name of Jesus. All works that we accomplish in Christ are for Christ.

What is interesting is that Jesus leads us in that example. Jesus told us in John chapter 10:25, "The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me." When we petition the Lord, we need to be very careful about how we are using the Lord's name. One of the most elusive ways we can use the Lord's name in vain is in our prayer life. We are praying for things that are not of God's desire or His will. We need to be cautious of how we pray in the name of the Lord. John Piper argues, "Instead of using prayer as a wartime walkie-talkie to call in supplies for the battle, we have turned it into an intercom to ask for more comforts in the den." Prayer is not a means of asking God to give us things that we want; it is about asking God to accomplish His will through us however He sees fit. Prayer is a battle cry of God's soldiers who are behind enemy lines. And we can test this or know because of the second part in how Jesus continues the conversation.

B. We must glorify the Lord.

God's glory is the litmus test of our ask and the purpose of our accomplishments. "I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (verse 13b) This is a condition that must govern the "whatever" we ask: Our desire is to see magnify the Lord in everything that we accomplish and everything that we ask. How can we glorify the Lord in our works? I want to remind you of John 14:11, "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Otherwise, believe because of the works themselves." When you put verse 11 and verse 12 of our passage together, you can understand that Jesus is talking about glorifying the Lord in helping those who see the work, believe in Christ. It is about helping others believe in the one true savior. This shapes the way we act and the way we ask. In our actions, are we pointing people to believe in Jesus? Are we asking for the same? In your prayer life and in your actions could you say it is for the glory of the Lord?

It's similar to a flood light. I remember growing up playing basketball in the driveway past dark, and we would turn on the flood lights. You cannot see what is behind the flood light, only what is in front of it. The works we are accomplishing to push back darkness should be illuminating the truth of Jesus. So we see true disciples will accomplish great things.

II. TRUE DISCIPLES WILL ABIDE IN CHRIST.

Jesus gives some clear markers for the disciples. "If you love me, you will keep my commands." (verse 15) In verse 21 he says the same, "The one who has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me." And again in verse 23, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word." These are abiding words. Staying connected to Christ, staying connected to Him through obedience to

the commands and to His words that He is giving us but Jesus also tells us how he is going to do that.

A. We will have a helper.

In verse 16, Jesus promises a helper. "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever" (John 14:16 CSB) This is the counselor or helper who is just like Him and then we see one of the most comforting promises Jesus said to His disciples in the hours before His death: "I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you." (verse 18) When Jesus says He is coming to them, He is not talking about the resurrection, He is not talking about His return to reign in the new heaven and new earth He is talking about the gift of the Holy Spirit. The helper, the Holy Spirit, is the answer to Christ not leaving you as an orphan. He makes this promise and then a few hours later He is crucified. An orphan is what the disciples will soon become if this is what Jesus is talking about but Jesus is promising that the helper is coming.

The expectation to accomplish great things is always accompanied by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We cannot do greater things than Christ unless we are living in the Spirit. When Jesus promised, "I will not leave you as orphans" He was speaking of the comforting ministry of the Holy Spirit and the guidance that the Spirit will give. Paul said in Romans 8:15, "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father!'"

I know many of you have come up with a variety of quarantine activities, but one of ours in the past couple of weeks was to teach our 6-year-old, Reagan, to ride her bike without training wheels. As we started, she would tell me, "Daddy do not let go." So, I would start out and hold the handle bars and the training wheels, then just the back of the seat. Reagan would start to ride and the whole time I am telling her, I am holding the seat, she asks, "Are you still holding on?" And I tell her, "Yes Regan, I am right here. I am still holding on." Then I would start to let go and I would tell her, "Okay you are doing it, I am not holding you." And Reagan would look back in a panic and then start to fall. The feeling of me not holding her really devastated her confidence to continue. This is the confidence Jesus was trying to teach His disciples, He says, I am never going to let go, I am never going to leave. You see the confusion that must be breeding in their minds, Jesus said He is going to leave, He keeps teaching them that he only has a little while longer, and so their confidence is diminishing but He says but at the same time, I will always be with you because I will be *in you*.

B. We will have Christ in us.

Jesus is giving insight for the disciples, I am not going to be running beside you, I am going to be running IN you. Jesus said in verse 20, "On that day you will know that I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you." It is because of this doctrine that Christ is in you, this union with Christ is because of the indwelling spirit of the belief that the great works of Christ that Jesus is talking about is possible. Anything that is good in the believer, any work that is worthy, is it Christ doing the work.

“Jesus answered, ‘If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.’” (verse 23) Last week in John 14:2, Jesus said, “I am going to prepare a home for you.” And the same word used for place/home in verse 2 is the same word used in verse 23. What does this mean? It means that the future promises of heaven will be a present reality for you. Jesus is going to prepare a home for you. But He is not going to leave you here as an orphan. He is going to make that home inside of you, to dwell in you.

And as we are here on earth, we are going to push back darkness with the presence of God, because God is in us and in essence we are ushering in the heavens by doing so. We are taking the torch of Christ and illuminating the darkness. This is why we can have the assurance as the people of God that the best days are still ahead. Even in moments of crisis and uncertainty we can say with full confidence for GABC that the best days are ahead of us not behind because the spirit of God is in us. And with the spirit of God in us we will accomplish great things for Him.

The days of Acts where thousands and thousands are added daily—those days are here because the spirit of God is here and not just beside us but in us. Not because of us but because of Christ in us. And the question for you to consider is Christ in you? Are you seeing the works of Christ being accomplished in you? Is Christ in you? Christ wants to come into your life and make His Home in you? The bible says in Revelation 3:20, “See! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.” Today, will you answer the call to Christ to come into your life? You can do so right now by confessing your sin to Christ and asking Him to save you.

OUTLINE

I. TRUE DISCIPLES WILL ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS.

Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father." *John 14:12 CSB*

Jesus said, "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." *John 14:13-14 CSB*

A. We must petition the Lord.

"The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me." *John 10:25 CSB*

B. We must glorify the Lord.

"I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son." *vs. 13b*

II. TRUE DISCIPLES WILL ABIDE IN CHRIST.

"If you love me, you will keep my commands." *vs. 15*

A. We will have a helper.

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever" *John 14:16 CSB*

B. We will have Christ in us.

"On that day you will know that I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you." *vs. 20*