

134. The Gospel of John—14:12-14

“Great and Precious Promises”

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

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John 14:12-14 (NKJV)

¹² "Most assuredly, 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 My Father. ¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

As we have been pointing out, these words were spoken by Jesus in an upper room somewhere in Jerusalem the night before His crucifixion—during their Passover celebration. That night the Lord gives His true disciples (Judas having already left to carry out his betrayal of Christ) one last teaching before His death to encourage them for the difficult days that lay ahead.

The encouragement came in the form of some promises—some incredibly important promises. In fact, I have named this message—*“Great and Precious Promises.”*

I took that title from what Peter said in his second epistle that God has given to us as His people—*“exceedingly great and precious promises.”*

The promises of God are basically two-fold:

1. Personal Promises

Promises that are personal in nature like:

Hebrews 13:5b (NKJV)

For He Himself has said, *“I will never leave you nor forsake you.*

And verses like Matthew 6:25-33, and so on.

“Don’t worry about your physical necessities—your heavenly Father knows what you need to live and will provide those things for you.”

2. Kingdom Promises

Promises that are directed at our work for the Kingdom—i.e., *“Kingdom Promises”*.

Kingdom promises are promises made to us by God in His Word to supply us with whatever physical resources and supernatural power we need to do the work He is calling us to do in saving the lost.

The promises Jesus gives to His disciples in John 14 are for the most part Kingdom promises.

Now before we look at these, we need to set the context once again—which is critical if we’re going to fully understand and appreciate the magnitude of the promises Jesus gave to His disciples that night.

After being with them for over 3 years—He drops a bombshell on them when He said—*“I am going to be leaving you soon—and where I’m going you can’t come with Me.”* (John 13:33)

In saying this to His disciples, He was in essence telling them that they would have to carry on without Him—that just because He was going away didn’t mean the work of the Kingdom was going to stop.

Upon hearing that, the first thing that must have immediately come to mind was—

- *“Jesus has the power, if He goes away the power goes with Him. How are we going to carry on the work He wants us to do without the power of Jesus?”*

Not only would they have to continue the work Jesus had begun without Him (or so they thought)—but now it was to be expanded beyond the land of Israel.

He made this *official* (although He had no doubt talked to them about it on different occasions) just before He ascended back to His Father after His resurrection when He said:

Matthew 28:19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ ... ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...

Upon telling them He was going to be leaving them soon and that they would have to continue the work of spreading the gospel and building God’s Kingdom in His absence—their hearts were immediately gripped with fear.

- How could they ever carry on the vital work of spreading the gospel without Jesus being with them?
- How could they, as simple fishermen and farmers (uneducated ‘blue-collar’ guys), take the gospel to the centers of learning, sophistication, and culture like—Athens, Alexandria, and Rome without Jesus?
- Who would listen to them—how would this even be possible?

All of this must have flashed across their minds overwhelming them in the moment prompting Jesus (Who of course knew their hearts) to say—*“Stop letting fear grip your hearts.”* (John 14:1).

He proceeds to allay their fears by once again reminding them that He is Almighty Jehovah God in human form, the Second Person of the Trinity. Because of that truth He said to them—**“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me...”**

But then of all the promises He made to them that evening, the biggest and most incredible of them all was when He said—*“I won’t really be gone from you. When I return to my Father, I will ask Him to send back to you another Helper, the Holy Spirit who will stay with you forever. I will not leave you alone like orphans—I will come to you.”* (verses 16-18)

- We’ll have a lot more to say about this starting next week.

Now, in our text this morning before He made *that* promise to them, He prefaced it by saying—

John 14:12-14 (NKJV)

¹² **“Most assuredly, 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 My Father.¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

In these verses, Jesus gave them two incredible blockbuster promises.

He promised His disciples (His Church):

- *They would do greater works than He had done.*
- *They would receive anything they prayed for in His name.*

I. The Promise of Great Works—verse 12

Jesus begins His promise in verse 12 with the words—**“Most assuredly, I say to you.”**

The phrase **“most assuredly”** (NKJV; “*verily, verily*”—KJV; “*truly, truly*”—NASB; “*Very truly*”—NIV) is Jesus’ way of saying—

- **“Listen up and don’t miss this. What’s coming is very, very important—You must hear and accept what I’m about to say.”**

John 14:12 (NKJV)

¹² **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me...**

When it comes to answered prayer or success in ministry it all starts with relationship—a relationship with Jesus Christ.

There are many people in this country who grew up going to church (Awana’s, Sunday School etc.) who have been introduced to Jesus (they know Who He is) and maybe in a sense they have spent years “*dating Jesus*” (going to church and hanging out with Him). **But until you’ve made a commitment to Him** (marriage)—*you have no right to claim one of His promises and God is under no obligation to answer your prayers.*

Relationship changes everything! (Use my relationship to my next-door neighbors—who then became family to me when I married their daughter)

Until you can say, **“My Father who is in heaven...”**—the rest of the “*Lord’s prayer*” in Matthew 6 **doesn’t apply to you.**

However, if you’ve received Jesus into your heart to be your Savior—you are now a child of God and this promise is yours to claim and benefit from:

John 14:12 (NKJV)

¹² **“Most assuredly, 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 My Father.**

What did Jesus mean when He said that His disciples would do greater works than He did—how is that possible?

I mean, Jesus walked on water. He cast out demons. He opened the eyes of the blind and healed the lame. He feed thousands of people with a few scraps of food—He even raised the dead!

- How would it be possible for Jesus' disciples to do greater works than that?!
- How would it be possible for us as His disciples to ever top what Jesus did?!

Well, we aren't going to 'top' what Jesus did—and that's not what He's promising here.

He didn't mean we would do *greater* works in the sense of "*more sensational*" works (you can't get more sensational than raising the dead!)—He was talking about greater works in the sense of '*scope*' or '*magnitude*'.

The key statement that unlocks the true interpretation of what Jesus is saying here is—"**because I go to My Father.**"

John 14:12 (NKJV)

¹² "Most assuredly, 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 My Father.**

What did Jesus promise He would do when He returned to His Father in heaven?

John 14:16-17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ ...I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth [Holy Spirit]...

This promise that Jesus' disciples would do greater works than He did during His earthly ministry is tied to the coming of the Holy Spirit into the world once Jesus returned back to His Father.

When Jesus was on the earth physically—He was limited by that physical body to one place at a time (Galilee, Jerusalem, Jericho etc.) God is an omnipresent Spirit—and so was Jesus before His incarnation.

When He became flesh and walked among us—He took on the limitations of that physical body (He got hungry, tired—and was no longer omnipresent).

When Jesus returned to the Father and the Holy Spirit was sent back in His place (Pentecost—Acts 2)—the Holy Spirit inhabited every believer in Christ and together they make up one Body—the "Body of Christ."

And once the Holy Spirit took up residence in every believer in Jesus—the Body of Christ would be in many places at once and work more works than He could during His earthly ministry when He was limited to one locality at a time by His physical body. (Elaborate)

Which means at this very moment—Jesus is in California and Illinois and New York and Florida—but at this moment He is also in China, Africa, New Zealand, Australia, Europe etc. doing through His Body the Church many many works.

II. The Promise of Answered Prayer—verse 13-14

John 14:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ **And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.** ¹⁴ **If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.**

Now before we look at this please take note that the "**and**" at the beginning of verse 13 ties verses 13 and 14 with verse 12.

In other words, Jesus is saying that the works He is promising to do through His Church in verses 13 and 14—are directly tied to and built upon—PRAYER!

It's as James said, "You have not because you ask not." (James 4:2)

But what about this statement? (verses 13-14)

It seems like an incredible thing for Jesus to have promised us—how are we to understand it?

There are many Christians who have been taught that this promise is a 'blank check' just waiting for us to 'fill in the amount' and 'cash' it by faith. So, no matter what it is—a new car, new house, wealth, health—whatever you desire all you have to do is ask for it in Jesus' name and He will give it to you—it's an 'ironclad' promise!

And if you don't get what you've asked for—if you're not healed or prospered it's because of a lack of faith on your part! Well, I think what's really in view is what James went onto to say—

James 4:3 (NLT2)

³ And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.

To properly understand what Jesus is really saying in John 14:13-14—we need to understand 2 things.

A. Who Was Jesus Speaking When He Gave This Promise?

Remember context is everything when it comes to properly interpreting anything in God's Word—especially when it comes to a promise He has given. And so once again, to whom was Jesus speaking when He gave this promise that "**whatever you ask in My name, that I will do**"—the multitudes?

No—He was talking to His disciples in the upper room the night before His crucifixion.

Earlier in His ministry, Jesus had laid out the cost of being one of His disciples:

Matthew 16:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ ..."If anyone desires to come after Me [be My disciple], let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

1. Deny Yourself

The idea is to deny yourself your goals and desires to live for God's glory and the building of His Kingdom—and yet:

2 Timothy 4:3-4 (NLT2)

³ For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear.

⁴ They will reject the truth and chase after myths. [Comment]

Being a disciple of Christ is a life of self-denial and service to Jesus as our King. This means we must abandon all selfish desires and goals that only seek to 'use' God to get material 'goodies' from Him.

In other words, a true disciple isn't going to be seeking after personal riches—his or her prayers will be for the glory of God not the glory of self.

2. Take Up Your Cross

The Cross was a symbol of death.

To take up one's cross not only means to die to self— it also means to be willing to pay any price for Christ's sake. It is the willingness to endure shame, embarrassment, reproach, rejection, persecution, and even martyrdom for His sake.

The cross represents the suffering that is ours because of our relationship to Christ.

One pastor put it well—

“Christ does not call disciples to Himself to make their lives easy and prosperous, but to make them holy and productive. Willingness to take up his cross is the mark of the true disciple.

As the hymnist wrote, “Must Jesus bear the cross alone, and all the world go free? No, there's a cross for everyone, and there's a cross for me.”

Those who make initial confessions of their desire to follow Jesus Christ, but refuse to accept hardship or persecution, are characterized as the false, fruitless souls who are like rocky soil with no depth. They wither and die under threat of the reproach of Christ (Matt. 13:20–21). Many people want a “no-cost” discipleship, but Christ offers no such option.”

3. Follow Jesus

Matthew 16:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

True discipleship is following in the steps of Jesus, living the life that He lived.

As Jesus said of Himself—*“I haven't come to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me”, “I haven't come to be served but to serve and to give My life a ransom for many.”*

1 John 2:6 (NKJV)

⁶ He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

John 10:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

Jesus' whole life was wrapped up in glorifying His Father through obedience and manifesting His character to the people of the world.

A true disciple of Jesus will have the same passionate desire to glorify God through obedience and manifesting His character (primarily His love) to this world.

Believe me—selfishness and carnality are not qualities of those who *are* following Jesus—but of those NOT following after Jesus.

A life of selfish, carnal desires which then get translated into prayer in the name of faith—is not the kind of person Jesus made this promise to.

A. To whom was Jesus speaking when He gave this promise?

B. What does it mean to ask for things in Jesus' name?

John 14:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

Asking “in Jesus' name” is not some kind of magic phrase that ‘energizes’ our prayers and guarantees that whatever came before those ‘magic words’ it will be answered—

No matter how selfish and outlandish the request—it now must be honored and answered by God because we stuck “in Jesus' name” at the end of our prayer—that’s ridiculous!

In the Jewish mind, to ask for something in someone else’s name meant to ask for something as their representative—something they would have asked for if they had been there in person.

It would be something that was in harmony with their character and personality—for in the Jewish mind the concept of “Name” speaks of nature:

Moses asked God “*Tell me Your name*”—and God responded by telling Moses His nature: “My name is: merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abounding in goodness and truth...” (Exodus 34:6-7).

To ask for something in Jesus' name means I’m standing in His place and asking for what He would have asked for if He was physically here on the earth—especially when it comes to the work of God’s Kingdom—

“Father, I’m asking this on behalf of Jesus because I know He would have wanted this. I know this because it is consistent with His character and what He was most passionate about during His earthly ministry (His Father’s glory and the salvation of lost sinners—Luke 19:10).”

In other words, if Jesus wouldn’t have asked for it—we’d better not either! (Jesus would never have asked His Father for material wealth)

We are Jesus’ representatives doing His business and building His Kingdom here on earth. Whatever we need to accomplish His work we are to ask the Father for, in His name, and He (Jesus) promised He would make sure we got whatever we needed to do the work He commissioned us to do.

Remember that prayer in Jesus' name is ***always for the glory of God***. Jesus always prayed for things that glorified His Father—

John 14:13 (NKJV)

¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

➤ “So then what you’re saying is that I can’t pray for myself—for my needs?”

No, that’s not what I’m saying since **when God provides for His children—He is glorified!**

(Explain—also Matthew 6:31-33)

In closing—when we understand that to ask for something in Jesus’ name means to pray for something that He Himself would have prayed for if He were physically present, something that is consistent with His character and would glorify His Father—

It is easy then to understand that anything we ask for (especially when it comes to the work of God’s Kingdom)—will be given to us!

One author said it well—

“God wants to use us as His instruments on the earth to show His power through by being a witness to bring others to Christ. This is all tied in with prayer—Christ centered prayer. Prayer for the glory of God from the heart of a disciple whose heart breaks to see a world lost and on its way to destruction—a world taking glory away from God. That kind of prayer will be answered—the kind that brings glory to God not to self with carnal selfish prayers. So many people have gotten caught up in this teaching—God help us to understand what it means to truly follow Jesus Who was (and is) so selfless and other’s centered.”

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower, and not an earth-dweller— please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).