

## **Powerful Promises**

Scripture: John 14:7–14

Code: 43-73

John 14 is our text, John 14. I just will say very briefly – because I don't want to go into too much review that chapters 13 through 16 are what are basically called the Upper Room Discourse, the Upper Room Discourse. It's unique in the gospels. No one else records this, none of the other writers. But John does and he does in detail.

This is Thursday night. This is the night that Judas left, where Jesus gathers with the disciples; and after they gather and they sing a hymn, they go to the Mount of Olives, and He goes to pray. And then He is arrested; and then on Friday, He is crucified; and on Sunday He rises from the dead. So this is His last night with His disciples, and He provides for them the most marvelous, thrilling, stunning litany of commands, warnings, promises, commitments that have ever been given.

This is the legacy of Jesus. This is His final will and testament to His own apostles. It is a moment like no other moment in the life of the disciples, as well as in the life our Lord. Staggering words from the lips of the Savior. They are amazing; they are shocking; they are wondrous. They have an immediate application to these 11 men and they have an extended application to all of His disciples through all of history. We know that because He seals all these promises in 13 to 16 with a prayer in chapter 17.

That same night, He offers that great prayer and He says, "I pray not only for these, but for all who will believe in Me," which means He's extending these promises to all of us. So it is 13 to 16, the listing of all the promises; 17 He prays for the Father to fulfill all the promises that He has given those that apply directly the apostles and those that are extended to all His followers through all of human history. It is an unparalleled portion of Scripture. We sort of want to listen to the last words of people just before they die. Those are very important things that are on their mind at the end. Well, this is our Lord's final talk with those He loves.

We looked at chapter 13, and chapter 13 was how He began. And it's a chapter on love, how much He loved them, and how much He wanted them to love each other. That was very, very important. "He loved His own who were in the world to perfection." That's how 13 begins. And it ends with Him telling them to, "Love one another so that all men will know that you are My disciples."

It's a chapter on love. He demonstrates what love does by washing dirty feet, something they weren't willing to do, but He humbles Himself. Love is humble; love does the most humble tasks; that's what love is. It's an action, it's not just a feeling.

Now in the middle of that love chapter, there are two dark moments. That 13th chapter has two dark moments. In one of those, He exposes and confronts Judas who is about to betray Him and He sends him to finish his betrayal. The other dark moment comes at the end of the chapter when Peter is told that he will be a denier of Christ. He will Christ three times. So there are some dark moments in that 13th chapter.

But it is about love and about humility, and then those two little moments – one with Judas, critical; one with Peter, equally critical. Judas, never restored, hanged himself, and went to his own place, eternal hell. Peter restored and became the great apostolic preacher that launched the church on the Day of Pentecost.

But as we come to chapter 14, the section on love and humility is in the background, and now it's time to comfort these disciples. They now know He is leaving. He is going to die. He has told them that repeatedly, although they had a hard time processing it.

He described to them details: "I will be arrested by the chief priests and those who are in charge in Israel. I will be beaten; I will be spit on; I will be abused. I will even be lifted up. I will be crucified." And then He went on to tell them, of course, that in three days He would rise from the dead.

So they know He is leaving. They're having a very difficult time processing this. In just hours before this, He had told them that the whole temple system would be completely destroyed; not one stone would be left on another. Divine judgment would come on Israel on Judaism. They thought the Messiah would come and bring divine judgment on the rest of the world. He says it's coming on the Jews for their apostate religion, they're defection from true worship of God. So things are really crumbling in a very rapid way.

Monday looked good. He came into the city, the triumphal entry. Everybody's spirits were high. They were shouting their Hosannas to the one who comes in the name of the Lord, Son of David. The masses of tens of thousands of people were hailing Him as the potential Messiah. But now it's Thursday, that's all gone bad. They've turned against Him. The leaders have turned against Him, the crowds are turning against Him, and now He announces His death; and He calls on them in the midst and the throws of all of this, even facing a denial of one apostle and the betrayal of another to make sure they're faithful to Him and faithful to love each other.

In the crumbling realities of their dreams and ambitions, He starts in chapter 14, verse 1, to prop them back up with some very important, comforting words. Let me begin reading in verse 1, chapter 14. We've already gone through the opening section, but I want to read it just to give you the context.

"Do not let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me." I just want to stop there and say this: There is a transition that's going to happen now, and these words speak to that transition – and I'll say more about that.

"In my Father's house are many dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I'm going."

Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we don't know where You're going. How do we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you know Him and have seen Him."

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?' Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me?"

"The words that I say to you, I do not speak of My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe Me that I'm in the Father and the Father is in me; otherwise, believe because of the works themselves. 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."

Now this is very profound, and you can see what the theme is. It's Christ and the Father, the Lord Jesus and the Father all the way through. "The Father's in Me; I'm in the Father. The Father will do this; I will do this."

He is showing His intimate, essential connection to God the Father. That is absolutely critical. Why? It's introduced in verse 1: "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me," or, "You believe in God, you believe also in Me."

In other words, what He's saying is a transition is about to take place. "I'm handing you off to God. I'm giving you to God. I am leaving." And He hold them a number of times earlier; and we've already looked at it: "I go to My Father. I go to My Father." He has said that.

They understood God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. They knew He was the Son of God, and now He's saying, "I'm going to the Father," and they are troubled by this; deeply troubled by this. And so He is saying, "You need to come to the place where you believe in Me and you believe in God. You've got to trust the Father."

Now what makes that challenging is this: "You have seen Me. I have been here. I have, as it were, held your hand for three years. I have provided your food. I have provided on occasion your tax money. I have provided your shelter. I have provided your protection.

"I have taught you the truth of the kingdom of God. I have answered every question you've ever had about life and doctrine. I have done everything I can to make you understand the truth. I have been your source of instruction, your source of wisdom, your source of strength, your source of protection. I have been your hope for the future. I'm leaving; I'm handing you off. I'm leaving." They have to be able to trust the one to whom He is giving them.

Do you remember when He prayed in John 17? He prayed this way: "Father, I have fulfilled Your will. I have taken care of My own. Now, Father, I give them to You. Take care of them." That's the prayer in 17. That is His petition regarding this commitment, this transition.

In a sense, it's pretty easy to live by sight, right? You wake up every morning and Jesus is there. Wherever you are in the traveling group for three years, you wake up every morning and Jesus wakes up probably earlier than you, and He's there. And sometimes maybe you might fear that as things were going bad, He might not be there. But He seems to be able to escape every difficulty.

He goes to the synagogue in Nazareth and they're ready to stone Him, and He just disappears out of their midst. He seems to be able to avoid imminent death when He will say clearly, "They're plotting to take My life," and He has so far avoided it. So you're very used to the fact that no matter how tough things are – and also you're used to the fact that you go into certain towns and they reject Him, and you sort of shake the dust off your feet and go to the next town, and He survives that. And every day you wake up and He's there, and He's there for everything you need.

I can't even imagine if you were among the disciples that you'd be asking a serious question to another disciple when you had Him. Why would you want to get some kind of medial answer when you can go to the source of all truth and wisdom? He's everything to them, absolutely everything. And they've lived, up to this point, by sight.

Nobody in the Old Testament really could say, "We lived in the presence of God physically." There were people in the Old Testament who had visions of God; that's for sure. There was Jacob who, in Genesis 32, wrestles with an angel. There was Moses in Exodus 33 and 34 who has a glimpse of the sort of shaded glory of God's. There's Manoah, father of Samson who sees God. There's Moses and Aaron and Nadab and Abihu who see God's glory. There's Isaiah who talks about the vision of God's glory in chapter 6. There's Ezekiel who sees the glory of God in Ezekiel, chapter 1.

But apart from those very rare and very unique and very muted visions of God, there's no actual physical presence of God. Yes, there's a cloud while they're wandering in the wilderness – a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night – but nothing like God in human flesh. So this is an incredibly, wondrous experience for a very few people – 12 to be precise – on a 24/7 basis, and then the women who were surrounding them and often traveled with Jesus, and then others of His followers who were walking to follow along at some point in the three-year journey.

But it was a rare, singular experience for God to manifest Himself in human form this way. So for them to have had that and now be told, "I'm going to the Father, and I'm going to go there, and I'm going to prepare a place for you. I'm going to do some work to get ready, and I'm going to come back - " as He said in the opening verses " – and take you to be there," it's a bit scary because they'd been living by sight.

And so Thomas isn't sure about this, and in verse 4 Jesus says, "You know the way I'm going," and Thomas speaking for the rest says, "Lord, we don't know where you're going," and he's speaking collectively, "We don't know." He's not the only one who feels this way: "We have no idea where you're going and we don't know the way."

And then He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. The way to the Father is through Me." But they're having a hard time being sure that God will receive them the way Christ has, that God will care for them the way Christ has, that God will meet their needs the way Christ has, that God will be their protector and their source of truth and wisdom the way Christ has. It's a huge change, huge change.

That sets up the whole point of verses 7 to 14, which we're going to look at, because here, our Lord has one goal in mind, and that is to assure them that being handed over to the care of God is better. It's not just okay; it's not even an equal transition. If you look at chapter 16, verse 7 – chapter 16,

verse 7, same Upper Room, same evening, a little later: "I tell you the truth, I'm telling you the truth; it is to your advantage that I go away. It's to your advantage that I go away."

That would have been very difficult for them to comprehend. How could anything be better than having the Lord Jesus, the Son of God with you all the time? "It's to your advantage," and we'll talk more about that in a moment. He wants them to understand that being handed over to the care of the Father is better for them because Christ in His incarnation had certain limits. He was limited physically.

Although He was with them for that three years, He wasn't always in their immediate presence, but He would be after He left. His power was always around them, and they saw that power and they experienced that power. But they were about to experience it in a way that was beyond what they'd seen with Him.

And He provided resources for them, physical resources, the things they needed in life. But He was about to open the floodgates of heaven and pour out blessing which they couldn't even comprehend. So to comfort them, our Lord reveals three things. He reveals His person, His power, and His provision; His person, His power, and His provision. And it's all about this whole idea of getting them to be able to deal with the transition to the care of the Father.

Let's look, first of all, at the revelation of His person in verses 7 to 11. "If you had known Me," I'll stop there for a minute. Wait a minute; they knew He was the Christ, the Son of God; they said that. They knew He was the Holy One of God; they said that. They knew He was the Messiah, the Anointed One; they said that. They knew He was the Son of David; then knew all of that. What does He mean, "If you had known Me"?

As much as they knew, it wasn't the full story. Yes, they knew He was the Son God, but what did that fully mean? Yes, they knew He was the Messiah, but what did it fully mean? Yes, they knew He was the Holy One of God as they confessed back in chapter 6, but what does that fully mean? Obviously, it came short of knowing this: "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

So what they didn't really understand was that He was in truth God incarnate. Was He deity? Yes. But what did that mean? What they didn't understand is what I read you in Colossians, that He was the fullness of the Godhead bodily, that He was, "The exact representation of God," Hebrews 1:3, that He was the visible image of the invisible Father.

In other words, their Christology was accurate, but not complete. They didn't get the whole thing. And, furthermore, they didn't understand the relationship between Him and the Holy Spirit. He had told them that He did what He did by the power of the Holy Spirit, and to blaspheme Him was to blaspheme the Spirit who is doing the work through Him. But they didn't fully understand. They were a little short on their Trinitarian theology.

Now we can give them a little space on that because that's a very difficult doctrine. Trying to unscrew the inscrutable is trying to explain the Trinity. So they come a little bit short, and in a sense, it's a sad thing.

Jesus said to them, "I'm going to My Father and I'm going to My Father's house, and in My Father's house there are many rooms. So I'm going to start making rooms ready for you, and I'm going to come back and get you and take you there. And by the way, I am the way there; you don't have to worry about that. I am the way; there's not another way. I am the way.

"Through Me, you will get there. I'll come; I'll get you; I'll take you to the Father's house and to the room I've prepared for you. If you really knew Me, you would know there's nothing to fear in passing you on for the time-being to the care of the Father; because if you fully knew who I was, you would know that I and the Father are one. And so My care for you is no different than the Father's care for you." That's the message.

"From now on, you know Him," present tense. "From now on, you can say you are knowing Him and have seen Him." What does He mean by that? "From this moment forward, your knowledge of the Father is going to grow. Your knowledge of the Father and My relationship to the Father is going to grow through My death and My resurrection particularly."

Do you remember what happened when all the disciples were finally gathered eight days after the resurrection, and Thomas walked in the room and Thomas saw Jesus? Do you remember what he said? Listen to John 20:28. "Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and - ' what " – my God." They got it, but it wasn't until after the resurrection.

"My Lord and my God." Son of God; yes. Holy One of God; yes. "My Lord and my God." The resurrection. The resurrection was the exclamation point on His deity that validated His claim to be one with the Father. They understood it; they understood it. Then when they understood that He and God were one, they could then trust that the same care He gave them, the same provision He gave them, the same power He had displayed to them would be what God would provide for them because they were one.

From now on, from this point on, the end of the resurrection, they understand He is God. But there's so much more than that. That's not the end of their "from now on" lesson. Let me show you what I mean by that. Turn to chapter 14 and go to verse 16.

"I will ask the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever. Who is the other helper? Who's going to take My place? The Father who gave Me to you will give you the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it doesn't see Him or know Him. But you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. He's going to give you the Holy Spirit.

"The Holy Spirit has been with you; you know that all along. Now He's going to be in you. This is a greater dimension of the Spirit's presence, so you're going to know the Father. You're going to know the Father because I'm going to ask the Father. And the Father cares about you, and the Father's going to give you someone to take My place, and that someone is going to be the Holy Spirit, and He is the Spirit of truth. You're not going to lose touch with the truth; you're not going to be absent from class; you're not going to lose your teacher. You're going to have the Spirit of truth as your instructor."

Go down to verse 26. There, again, He is identified as the Comforter, the Comforter, the *parakltos*, the one called alongside to help, "The Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name."

Again, He's saying, "Look, the Father's not going to leave you without help. The Father gave me to you, and now the Father is going to give the Spirit to you, and He will be your new teacher, and He will be your Comforter. He will be your helper. He will be to you everything that I have been. And the Father will send Him in My name. We agree on this; we work together; we're one. He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. You're not going to lose out on anything. The Spirit of God is coming from the Father."

Chapter 15, verse 26: "When the Comforter comes, or when the Helper comes, whom I will send." In chapter 14 He said, "The Father would send." Here he says, "I will send." Because they're in perfect agreement, they act together. "He is the Spirit of truth whom I will send from the Father. He proceeds from the Father." In other words, He is part of the Trinity. He is of the same nature as God.

What's happening here is our Lord is instructing them on the essence of the Trinity, on the nature of the Trinity. There's no loss with Jesus leaving. "It's the same God who is in Christ meeting your needs, who will be back meeting your needs through the sending of the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father just as I proceeded from the Father, who is one with the Father just as I am one with the Father."

Then in chapter 16, you could look down to verse 13: "When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth." Again, the emphasis here is on instruction, truth. "He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears He will speak. He speaks for the Trinity. He speaks for the Father, He speaks for the Son, and He will disclose you what is to come. He will glorify Me. He will take of Mine and disclose it to you.

"All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore, I said He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you – the Father, through the Son, through the Spirit; everything comes down to you. The Spirit comes to you to take what is Mine and give it to you; and what I have to give to you is what the Father has given to Me." This is Trinitarian theology at its best, at its best. "So you have nothing to fear. You have nothing to be concerned about."

Now go back to chapter 14 for a moment. He's making this promise. And, of course, they hadn't heard all that I just read to you because it's coming a little bit later. But He says, "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. From now on you know Him and have seen Him. You're going to begin now to know Him," although that knowledge didn't come until after the resurrection when Thomas says for everybody, "My Lord and my God."

And then the Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost and all that is the Father's and all that came through the Son comes now through the Holy Spirit, and they have the fullness of everything. And then it's crystal clear to them, and they launch on the Day of Pentecost; they launch with a full Trinitarian theology. But now, even though Jesus says, "From now on, this will become knowledge to you," Philip shows at that moment they're still ignorant.

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father and it's enough for us. Sorry, Lord, we have to see it. We want to see God." This is disappointing; this is very disappointing. Shallow, faithless question.

By the way, it's we. Don't lay all this blame on Philip. He's talking for the rest of these guys who are having the same problem: "Show us the Father. Show us the Father." Sounds like a sort of pre-charismatic charismatic: "I need a vision."

All right, maybe he's thinking of Jacob wrestling with an angel of God. Maybe he's thinking of God visiting Abraham earlier in Genesis. Maybe he's thinking of the Mosaic vision of God, or Ezekiel, or Isaiah. But I don't know if they're really going through the litany of Old Testament revelations of God. There were those rare visions of God.

I think he's saying more than that. I think he's just saying, "Look, I don't think we can do this thing by faith. I really don't think we can do this by faith. God's going to have to show up. God is going to have to show up. You're handing us off here and we're used to having You in our grip."

I doubt that he's a biblical scholar and that he threw those kind of things at our Lord. This is just weak faith, and we know they had weak faith because Jesus kept calling them, "Oh, you of little faith."

"We want a vision of God. We want a visible God. We want a God we can touch, a God we can handle, or we're going to have trouble believing." This is a preview of Thomas: "If I don't see, I won't believe."

This is their mentality, and Jesus says to him with some pathos in verse 9, "Have I been so long with you and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? Come on, you've been with Me three years. You still don't get it. You have been with Me; you have been with the Father. He who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

They should have known. They should have known. And He reminds of the two categories of evidence, verse 10: "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you, I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves."

So beginning of verse 10: "Believe Me for the words and believe Me for the works. My words are the words of God," John 7:46. Nobody ever spoke like this man, nobody. "Why are you saying, 'Show us the Father'?"

I expect that our Lord did expect that because in chapter 8 and verse 19 when He was talking to the Pharisees, the Pharisees said to Him – this is John 8:19, "Where is Your Father? Where is Your Father?" Jesus had said, "The Father who sent Me testifies about Me."

So they say, "Where is Your Father? Show us Your Father." Jesus says, "You don't know Me or My Father." But they said, "Show us Your Father. God is Your Father? Show us God."

We expect that from cynical, skeptical, unbelieving Jewish leaders; but from Philip? "Come on, you can't live by faith?" No man has seen God at any time in His fullness; God is not visible. God is the invisible God. Sometimes He manifests Himself in a cloud, or a pillar of fire, or some vision; but has never manifested Himself with such clarity as He did in the person of Jesus Christ. They want a



vision of God. It's really a heartbreaking moment I think.

You know, just to set the record straight, if you came here to see a miracle; sorry, you're not going to see one. If you came here to hear the voice of God or if you're thinking somewhere along the line you're going to hear God talk to you; you're not. If you came here to see God in some vision or some form; it won't happen. If you came to experience some supernatural revelation or some phenomena; sorry, it's not available. If you came here to be surrounded by angels or to talk with your dead uncle; not going to happen. You'd be better to go to a séance because Satan can falsify all of that. He can falsify all of it.

Here, we live in faith. I have never seen Jesus, never like those disciples. I've never had a vision of Jesus. I've never met an angel. I've never known if an angel was around. I've never heard God speak. I've never felt the presence of God. I have never heard heavenly voices. I have never had a conversation with my dead parents. I've never seen God. But I believe with all my heart that God is, Christ is, and the Holy Spirit is.

Why do I believe? Do I have some esoteric, elevated, gnostic, spiritual sight? No. I have this book and it is all the evidence I need. It is obviously the revelation of God and the only one I need.

I do see Jesus in this book. I do meet angels in this book. I do hear the voice of heaven here. I do understand the location of my dead parents by reading this book. I do see God revealed throughout the pages of this book. And this book has stood the scrutiny and the tests of all the true believers and all the haters and skeptics throughout history, and it has stood unassailable. It is without flaw, without error. It is the truth and I believe it.

But we live by that faith, faith in the God of Holy Scripture. So we're not here offering miracles, we're not here offering supernatural experiences. The miracle that we see all the time is the miracle of salvation when God transfers someone from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of His beloved Son. That is a total transformation of an entire human being called regeneration, new birth, new life.

But we don't live by sight, we live by faith. We are the blessed who having not seen, yet believe. And it isn't that we believe just willy-nilly, we believe what Scripture says. Here lies the evidence.

So my prayer is not, "Show me God; show me Jesus; show me the angels; do a miracle; give me some kind of mystical experience." My prayer is the prayer of the apostles in Luke 17:5, "Lord, increase my faith. Increase my faith," and I will clue you in.

Your faith increases proportionately to your understanding of Scripture. Scripture reveals God; and the more you see God revealed in Scripture, the greater your faith becomes, the stronger it becomes. You know that. You've sat here long enough that your faith is anchored.

Three years didn't seem to be enough for Philip and his friends. They still didn't have sufficient faith to calm their troubled hearts at the prospect of Jesus disappearing from the scene physically. He says, "You've had enough. You've had the words. Do you not believe?" That's the issue. "Where's your faith? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? You've heard the words. You've seen the works. Believe Me."

He says, “Do you not believe?” in verse 10. “Believe Me,” in verse 11. It’s about believing. Verse 12: “He who believes.” It’s a believing issue here.

“You’re going to have to go - ” He says to these guys “ – from sight to faith. You’ve heard My words. You know no one’s ever spoken the way I speak. You’ve seen My works. You know no one can do these works except the power of God be in him. You should know who I am.” So this is the revelation of His person meant to comfort them to know that He is one with the Father, and it will have an unfolding kind of reality that will eventually grip their hearts and anchor them down.

Quickly, there’s a second revelation, the revelation of His power; not just His person, but His power. Look at verse 12: “Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in Me - ” again, it’s about believing “ – the works that I do, he will do also; and greater than these he will do because I go to the Father.”

What is that? What is that? First of all, the primary interpretation to the apostles, 11 apostles, “You who believe in Me, you’re going to do what I have done. You’re going to do also what I have done.”

What does that mean? “You’re going to do miracles.” Read the book of Acts. Read the opening of the book of Acts. The apostles, the associates of the apostles had that miraculous power. They used their miracle power to do the very same miracles that Jesus did – miracles over disease, miracles over demons, miracles over death. That power was extended beyond Jesus, so in a sense, it’s greater in extent.

It was Jesus; and you remember, He delegated those powers to the apostles, but we don’t see illustrations of the apostles doing miracles. In fact, sometimes they come back and report, “We tried, but we couldn’t pull it off.” And now all of a sudden that’s going to change, and not greater in kind because you couldn’t do greater in kind or nature of miracles, you couldn’t do greater miracles in terms of what they actually were, but greater in extent.

“This is going to spread through all 11 of you and those associated with you,” even someone like Philip. So He says, “Greater things are going to happen. As this is multiplied, miracle power is multiplied through you starting on the Day of Pentecost.”

In Acts 2, you read how it flows through the Apostolic Age. This is the power given to the apostles. It’s defined for us clearly in 2 Corinthians 12:12, the signs and wonders, and miracles of an apostle. And it’s in Hebrews 2:4 where it says that the message the apostles preached was confirmed by signs and wonders and mighty deeds done by the apostles.

Before the Scripture was written, the way God validated those preachers was by miracles. They’re not going to do greater in kind. What’s greater than a healing, a resurrection, casting out demons? Nothing. But greater in extent, greater in extent. This is primarily to the apostles. But when that Apostolic Era ended, by the way, there’s still a sense in which greater works are being done.

Compare, for example, the fact that Jesus’ entire ministry was in a little, tiny country about 60-plus miles long and a few miles wide. In fact, that’s always amazing to me that the Israeli Air Force can only fly two-and-a-half minutes east and west without going across a border or into the ocean. It’s such a tiny place.

He never got out of that place. He crossed the border to the north, the border to the east side just a few steps really. And now look what's happened. Through the disciples of Jesus, the gospel has encircled the entire globe, and it's doing it all the time. It's alive right now in the air, on the Internet, and through radio and media constantly, through print – every means possible.

“One of the reasons that it's better that I go away is that when I go away, you're going to have the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is going to come and fill up your Trinitarian understanding of Me. Another reason it's good for me to go away is that when I go away, the Holy Spirit's going to come and you're going to do greater works, and the works are going to get out of this little, tiny country and they're going to cover the globe. And you're going to do even more miracles than I did; and this is all going to happen because of the Holy Spirit. He will lead you into all truth.

“But the Holy Spirit will come upon you - ” Acts 1:8 “ – and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth. The Spirit will empower you for global ministry. All of this because I go to the Father, because I go to the Father.”

There's a third point – just enough time maybe to make it; leave a few things out. Our Lord reveals to them His provision, His provision. Verses 13 and 14: “By the way, you think My being gone is going to create some serious issues in you receiving what you need? Let Me say this: Truly, truly I say to you.”

This is hard to believe, that's why there's that emphasis. “Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in Me,” here we are about believing again. He says, “Do you not believe?” in verse 10, “Believe,” in verse 11, “He who believes,” in verse 12, and down in verse 13, “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.” Wow. “If you ask anything in My name, I'll do it.”

Again, He's connecting Himself with the Father so that the Father may be gloried. “The Father and I are one. The Father wants what I want; I want what the Father wants. What I want for you is what the Father wants for you, that's why the Father is sending the Holy Spirit to take My place, and it's even better. You'll have a clearer revelation of My person, a greater expression of My power, and you will have an unparalleled opportunity at my provision, whatever you ask in My name.”

Well, what does that mean? Does that mean if you ask anything and say, “In Jesus' name, amen,” whamo, that sets it off? No. It's nice to say that; I think we should say that; it's good to say that.

But what does His name mean? Consistent with His identity, consistent with His person. That is it's as if you're standing in His place. It's as if when He says, “I'm sending the Spirit in the Father's name, I'm sending the Spirit because that's the Father's will.” If He says, “The Father sends the Spirit in My name, it means that the Father is sending the Spirit because that's My will. So if you say, ‘If you ask anything in My name,’ it means in consistency with My will.”

First John 5:14, we have this confidence that we ask anything according to His will, we know that He hears it, and we have the petition we ask of Him consistent with His person, will, His purposes, what He's attempting to do in the world when we pray for what is consistent with His nature, consistent with His purpose, consistent with His perfections, consistent with His glory.

We've been taught to pray: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done as it is in heaven." We ask God for anything that is consistent with His person, His purpose, and His perfection, "And I'll do it. I will do it; personal promise. I will do it."

He doesn't say it'll happen like in some passive form. "I will do it. I'm going to be working for you through the Holy Spirit. The Father's working for you through the Holy Spirit. The whole of the Trinity is on your side providing everything you could ever need." And what we need to pray, and what they needed to pray: "Okay, I hear you. Lord, increase my - " what " - my faith. Let me believe that. Let me believe that." Let's bow in prayer.

Such an amazing, amazing kindness, grace, mercy extended toward these men who seem to struggle so much with the things that were most obvious; and yet, Lord, how gracious You were to them, finally bringing them to a full understanding of who You were after Your resurrection. And by the coming of the Spirit of truth, You taught them everything, and showed them all the things concerning Yourself; took what was the Father's that was given to You through the Holy Spirit given to them.

What an incredible thing that You would care enough to deposit the truth about Yourself with us. And then not only that, not only that through the Spirit of truth and the Word of truth, but that You would plant in us the Holy Spirit. And because we have the Holy Spirit, we receive power. "We're able to do exceeding, abundantly, above all we can ask or think - " Ephesians 3:20 " - according to that power that works in us," extend the gospel to the ends of the earth; and provision. And all it asks is prayer, prayer. We are simply to ask what is consistent with Your person, Your purpose, Your perfection; what is to Your glory and the glory of the Father. Lord, we thank You for this revelation of Yourself. May we be comforted in it.

Yes, it would be wonderful to have been there and walked with Jesus for three years. But in a sense, that's a step back because we have much more than they did. Even after those three years, they didn't understand. But through the coming of the Holy Spirit who's taken up residence in us, we have a true understanding of Your person, we have a true expression of Your power, and we have a true access to Your provision. We are so blessed and so grateful, and we thank You. We are unworthy. But make us faithful, and use us for Your glory we pray. Amen.

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