

Adopted and Empowered

John 14:12-20

Introduction: It is the last supper and to their shock, Jesus has revealed to the disciples that they are not going to be great men in His Kingdom, but like He Himself, they are going to be foot washers and common servants to one another. One of their close knit group will betray Him to death and the leader of their band will deny that he ever knew Him before the night is over. If this is not enough Jesus told them He was leaving them, and this time....they would not be able to find him or come with Him.

How are these men ever....in a million years....going to make it in this world without Jesus. They are riddled with weakness on every level. Their understanding is poor and their fear is strong. They have been living with God for over three years and they still doubt Him, misunderstand Him and have only superficial loyalty to Him. In just a few hours Peter will deny Jesus three times. Judas is busy as they speak betraying Christ to the Pharisees....and the rest of the disciples....Matthew records....

Matthew 26:56 that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Chapter fourteen begins Christ's final instructions about how to live in this world while Jesus is gone back to heaven.

He begins by telling them why He is going back to heaven. It is not to get away from them. It is not to get away from evil while they have to stay here and tough it out. This, by the way, is a common thought to many people. I was once asked why Jesus only had to suffer 40 days and 40 nights on the Cross but we have to suffer our whole life.

Jesus begins to reveal his provision for common folk, like us, to be able to follow Him and do the things He calls us to do. He begins with their greatest fear. We will be alone here like hopeless orphans whose parents have abandon them. We do not know how to do any of the things we need for ourselves. We are powerless and abandon.

So Jesus starts His instructions about living in this fallen world with the hope of an eternal life with Him in heaven. It is a complete misunderstanding and application to take this to mean that we should just hunker down here and wait for His return. It is a sustaining hope for the future, but it is still future. IT should bring a smile to our face and peace to our hearts. Paul knew that Jesus was in heaven thinking about and even praying for him when he faced hardship in the world.

Romans 8:31-34 ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? ³³ Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; ³⁴ who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Perhaps this is just intended for the disciples? Surely Jesus could not be speaking to me. I am no Peter...Ahh, do not be so sure. Are you afraid to be singled out and ridiculed or worse because you follow Christ? Are you pretty sure you know yourself until some circumstance shows you that you don't? Have you ever said you would follow Christ more closely and give more attention to His Word and then did not? And Peter was the strong one among them.

In fairness, there are some things that these men...soon to be called The Apostles did do that not every other believer has authority or power to do. Paul referred to them when he wrote to the Corinthian church.

2 Corinthians 12:12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

But that Jesus is thinking about future generations and not just the Apostles is also very clear in His prayer for Christians.

John 17:15-21 ¹⁵ "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil *one*. ¹⁶ "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.... ²⁰ "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

HOLD THAT THOUGHT! Jesus gives us the thought to hold that will sustain us while we live the life He has called us to on earth. For the next three chapters He will give the instructions for that life and...AND THIS IS HUGE! He will promise and give us the supernatural ability to live as His follower and witness in a fallen world.

John 14:12-20 ¹² "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. ¹³ "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*. ¹⁵ "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. ¹⁶ "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; ¹⁷ *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ "After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ "In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

Everything about Salvation is God's doing. He even grants the faith that is required to trust and love Him. The way back to heaven is entirely Christ's doing..."I will come and receive you." But they are wondering if they will survive now...with Him gone. Jesus answers by telling them that while He is in heaven His believers will: **Do Great Works, Pray effectively, Love Him and Obey His Commands.**

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me: "Believe in me" means entrust your physical life on earth into my hands in the same way that you are entrusting your eternal life in heaven to me. You cannot live as a Christian in your own strength. There is no religion, ritual, rite, prayer, obedience or morality that can take my place. What follows is true of those who trust me.

The works that I do, he will do also: The apostles did in fact do the works that Jesus did. We see the healings and even a resurrection scattered through the book of Acts. It is clear in Acts that every believer was not going about doing these things though. Some however did and they were powerful in their impact. When Paul was shipwrecked on Malta, Luke records that

Acts 28:7-9 ⁷ There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably. ⁸ His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and **healed** him. ⁹ When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.

But this was not the universal case. It is not true that every believer will always have the God like power that God the Son possessed. When Paul wrote his final letter to Timothy he included this note

2 Timothy 4:20 ²⁰ Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus **sick** in Miletus.

He also wrote this about Epaphroditus....

Philippians 2:25-27 ²⁵ But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. ²⁶ For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. ²⁷ Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.

And greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father: The Scripture and history confirm that the power to do miracles is not the exclusive possession of every believer. Jesus goes on to say that they, "will do greater works than these." So let's talk about what these works could possibly be.

They cannot possibly be more powerful or splendid or awesome than Christ's. Jesus is God the Son. The Universe obeys His commands because He created it. It is a logical impossibility to be greater than God or else we would be God and not Him. There may be a clue to understanding this in

John 5:20-21 ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. ²¹ For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

The greater things [same Greek phrase] are physical resurrection and eternal spiritual life. Jesus says that the father has shared the greatness of His Deity with Him, but will show Him even greater things about the power over life and death.

This is the legacy of Christ's Church in the world. And it came about precisely because Jesus was returning to the Father and not in spite of that. This rag tag band of weaklings is going to turn the world upside down through the foolishness of preaching.

Jesus preached for three and a half years and had 120 followers and 12 disciples. Peter preached for three and a half minutes and Luke records that....

Acts 2:41-42 ⁴¹Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

They were greater in scope than Jesus' were. Jesus never went more than about 75 miles from the place where He was born. The disciples went into the all the world and preached the gospel....just as He said they would.

Acts 1:8 ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

And all of this is going to happen as Jesus put it **because I go to the Father**. This would be a terrifying prospect to 11 guys in their spiritual condition. So Jesus tells them and us because we are doing this job today, that they must pray. We all believe we should pray, but Christ is specific about the prayer here and makes some sweeping promises. Again...hugely misunderstood and abused in our day. Precisely because there is ignorance and misinformation about what Christ is doing in the world and what His purposes are here.

"Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son: This is dependence! Notice the details here. What we ask has to be "in His Name" and this cannot mean tacking on that phrase at the end of every prayer. If that were true it would be a mantra...the secret Bible code to wealth and prosperity. Which sadly, for millions worldwide that is exactly what it has become and yet their poverty, both of spirit and body continues. This is a tragic misapplication of what Christ taught.

The meaning of the phrase **in my name** is clarified for us right here in the verse. **It is prayer from us that will exalt or Glorify The Father by exalting the Son.** It is doubtful how getting that new Lexus is going to meet this criteria. Neither does it exclude the new car, but seeking our prosperity and desires is the very definition of seeking our own glory. If God chooses, and He often does to give us prosperity and some of our desires that is an entirely different matter.

Matthew 6:31-34 ³¹ So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first His kingdom and His

righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Praying “**in Christ’s name**” is crucial. And it means prayer that seeks the exaltation of Christ and God in the world. If you want to be effective in prayer then you must know that this is not a magic phrase that releases the genie in the bottle. It requires understanding of what Christ came to do in the world. He came to reveal the Father and give Him glory. He came to pay the price for redemption and to open the only...the one and only... way... back... to... God! In His prayer to the Father He said

John 17:4-5 ⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

The Church’s theme these days is the glory of man. What God will do for you. How you are important to God. And....while it is true that God does great things for us and loves us, He does so by exalting Christ to us. God acts unilaterally to give these things to us who are hopelessly lost in sin and spiritual death. This is Glorious....

Romans 5:7-8 ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Prayer in Christ’s name comes naturally from those who trust Christ. It wants what Christ wants. It wants creation to give praise and worship to God.

"If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it: God delights to Glorify Himself in the world. If we knew this about Him and believed it we would be effective in Prayer. We would not pray “Lord you need to save my loved one because they are really lost” but “Lord make yourself known to my loved one that he or she may love you and glorify you for all eternity. You are worthy to be loved and saving my loved one will add another voice to Eternity’s choir. Lord....do this for your glory.” God saved you so that you and creation would praise Him for His grace and mercy. **KNOW IT! BELIEVE IT!**

Ephesians 1:12 ¹² in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments: “But you have just told us that we will deny you and forsake you....and sadly we fear you are correct. Just this very night we have been quarreling about which one of us was the most important and greatest. We have not loved you and we have not kept your commandment to love one another with you right here in the room. We barely love you now...how are we ever going to be able to do it with you gone back to heaven.” **HERE IS THE ANSWER FOR US ALL!**

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever: Jesus has this covered. He and the Father have always been aware of the broken state of men since the fall. They are under no illusions about what men are

capable of doing. Men are the only ones who think they can follow God and live for Him. The Father and the Son know they cannot. If you think you can you have been captivated, like Peter by your own opinion of yourself.

The expression **another Helper** is loaded with meaning. The word “another” means another of the same kind. If you have a white 2007 Toyota Corolla and you buy another [using this word] car it means that you bought another white 2007 Toyota Corolla. There is a Greek word to use if you are buying a another car and it is not exactly the same.

The word “helper” is likewise... full of meaning. It describes someone who comes right to your side. To take your arm, so to speak. To walk you through the difficulties. Once you entrust your life to Christ you are not alone in the trials of this life. The work of the Spirit is a neglected truth among evangelicals and an abused one among Charismatics. There is posturing and fear about Him. Satan exploits this fear. But there is nothing to fear about the Holy Spirit and His presence in your life. He has been sent to help you and comfort you in your trials, weaknesses, and sin. And that is just the tip of the iceberg!

Friends...our self confidence and self-sufficiency are at the root of many of our trials and circumstances. We fail to see our need of God’s help. We need Him to give us love for Him and one another. We need Him to give us joy in this world. This world gives cheap counterfeits of both love and joy. Neither endure and they leave us disillusioned and bitter. We need help...YOU NEED HELP!

The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him: In other words, the world cannot see the Holy Spirit anymore than it can perceive Christ. The knowledge of the Spirit is a work of God. No boasting is allowed!

This is also another place in the Scripture where we see the Trinity. God **the Son** will ask God **the Father** to send God **the Spirit** to help you. He will be just like having Christ with you. He is a comforter and companion exactly like Christ to you. Just as Jesus is one with the Father, so the Spirit is one with the Son and the Father. In fact...this is the prime directive of the Spirit of God. The Spirit is ministering Christ, exalting Christ, making Christ known in the world. He is not making Himself known. This is what we mean by the abuse of the Holy Spirit by many Christians.

John 16:14-15 ¹⁴ He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

But you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you: The Spirit will make His presence known by indwelling you. I will send the Spirit into your lives and it will be just as if I am abiding with you’re here and now. The Spirit is allusive. He is like the wind Jesus said.

John 3:8 ⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you: This is the promise of the Holy Spirit's work in your life. It is not just semantics. Jesus said that if you have seen me you have seen the Father. Now He is saying if you have the Spirit indwelling you I am indwelling you as well. Trinitarian truth is all over this part of John.

"After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also: What the world cannot see because it is dead and therefore blind to God, you will see because, I will be in you. This is a mystery....a previously unknown and unimagined truth. It is union with the Living God through trust in Christ.

Colossians 1:26-27 ²⁶ the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. ²⁷ To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory.

"In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you: Because He is returning to the Father and because He will refuse to leave us as orphans, He sends the indwelling Spirit to open the hearts, minds and spiritual understanding of everyone who entrusts their lives to Him.

The disciples will wait just another 50 days for these promises. Jesus is telling them now because they are troubled. They need to know that He has made provision for them to live in this world. In fact, it is the plan of God that we live in this world so that we can glorify Him. Believers do this before they even know they should. Creation praises The Glory of His Grace when He saves the likes of us. Believers give glory in brokenness, weakness and sin, because Christ alone gives us wholeness, strength and righteousness. These things are outside of us. Christ has saved us and He is glorified by our salvation. Much of this text is summed up by Peter...who was there....this way:

1 Peter 1:3-9 ³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade-- kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that your faith-- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-- may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.