

The Greater Work

by

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“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.” John 14:12 (ESV)

I was intrigued by the passage above when I read it Sunday, even though I have read it many times, for many years. It is one of those passages like many others that I believe, although I do not fully understand it. I know there is a great claim by Jesus when he says that His disciples will do even greater works than He. As His disciple, I take to heart what He said to those first disciples, as if He is now talking to me. You do realize that He told them to go and make disciples, and teach us everything that he had taught them? So, it is right that we should take to heart the things they were taught, as if we are sitting at the feet of Jesus receiving His instructions to our self, especially if we desire to be His disciple.

Before I share with you the revelation given to me Sunday, I need to tell you how I processed this promise before. The fact is, I didn't process it. It was just too great a promise for me to accept ... that I could do greater works than Jesus. Think about it. What has always come to my mind is Jesus walking on water, feeding thousands of people with a few fish and loaves of bread, and healing people blind from birth, full of demons, or with rotting flesh from leprosy. Those are the works I thought He was saying I would do, and I just couldn't see me doing those things, no matter how strong my faith grew. But, it made me wonder if my faith was the limiting factor that kept me from it. It became somewhat of a struggle, and because of this, I just stayed away from it and like I said, “I didn't process it.” But, I also wondered if the “works” He was referencing was something other than my understanding? Then I discovered that it is something else. What I came to see is that those miraculous things I just described were not the works of the Christ, but were rather signs that Jesus is the Christ. Look what Jesus said about those signs:

“But if I'm doing those things and you refuse to believe me, then at least believe the things that I'm doing. Then you will know and recognize that the Father is in me and that I am in the Father.” John 10:38 (God's Word Translation)

So we see it clearly and hear it directly from the mouth of Jesus that these signs were something other than His works. Those miraculous signs He did were to show that He and the Father are One. They authenticated Him. There is only one Son, Messiah and Savior, and that is Jesus. The signs He gave were about Him and about this truth ... and Him alone. Therefore, we are not expected to do those works, or greater works than He did with such signs. We cannot be Him, nor can we do what He did. Only He is capable of those things. However, there are some occasional exceptions. In history and presently there are some people who God has selected to convey similar signs so that their message about Jesus could be heard and believed. They are called “sign gifts.” These gifts are still active, especially in areas when a miraculous sign is needed to convince the listeners. Ask some missionaries about what they have seen in Africa and South America and

other places, and they will tell you those signs gifts are still being seen. They will confirm it. But these gifts are not the norm, and these missionaries are certainly not the Messiah. The “signs” like this are the exception, and I believe what Jesus was speaking of is different, something that all of His family, the Church, can be part of. Indeed, we can do His work, and in greater measure, if we understand what his work is, and be about the task of doing it. So what is the work of God so that we can do it? This specific question was asked of Jesus, so let’s see how He responded to it:

They then said, “What are we to do, that we may [habitually] be working the works of God? [What are we to do to carry out what God requires?]” Jesus replied, “This is the work (service) that God asks of you: that you believe in the One Whom He has sent [that you cleave to, trust, rely on, and have faith in His Messenger].” John 6:28-29 (AMP)

Don’t you love the Amplified Bible? It covers all the bases in describing a scripture. What is seen in this explanation is something essential for doing the work of God, in that we must live in close proximity to Christ. Then, the work we do becomes energized with His Spirit and His anointing. It is actually Him in us making this happen. But, it is not the “work” that He mentioned. So are we still unclear on His “works” that we are to do? If it is not the “signs” He performed, then what is it? Well, ask yourself what Jesus’ mission was and you’ll begin to focus in on the answer to what His work was. His mission was not to just heal and feed people, for all those people are now dead. If it was only just that, then His mission and work would have ended when He ascended and when they died? On the other hand, Jesus came to live, to die, to resurrect, and to redeem His Church, and it is not a temporary happening limited to that time and location, and certain people. He came to save the lost and to set captives free worldwide, until the day He returns. His mission was timeless, and to encompass future generations of people who followed. His mission on the cross was required of Him at that time to accomplish this redemption. But spreading the news of this, which is the Gospel, then became the work of the Church, and this is where our work comes in. Indeed, we have the capability of doing more than He did, just like He promised. It is called The Great Commission, or making disciples ... and a lot of them.

When Jesus had an active, public ministry, He had thousands of people following Him around. Toward the end, He began to state clearly the great challenge and sacrifice to be His disciple, and after He did this, *“many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.”* He looked and the only ones left were those twelve disciples He started with. One of those men checked out on Him (Judas), and then there were only eleven men who would have been called His disciples. This is where the foundation of true discipleship started, and it has grown from there.

So the question is, what is the work that we can do that Christ did, and, that we can do even greater as He promised? It is clear. We are to make disciples, which He emphasized we should do. In Jesus’ day, He had no Internet, no social media, no worldwide TV, nor any of the technology that we have today for spreading the Gospel and making disciples. Even so, through those eleven disciples and the early Church that began later at Pentecost, they made disciples, and statistics indicate that there are now over two billion people in this world who identify themselves as being a Christian. Talk about a great work of the Spirit through people and churches! Talk about the opportunities all around us! We now have preachers who can preach to over a million people in one audience through TV and large assemblies. We have authors who can reach millions of readers because of advanced ways to sell and distribute their books. We have churches that can house an audience in their facilities that will outnumber the total amount of people Jesus preached to in the

three years of His public ministry, and we are actively thinking of new ways to reach out and make even more disciples. But the best of the best way for making disciples is face-to-face, and small group gatherings. Indeed, as Jesus said, we have the capability of doing His work even in a greater measure than He did, and this is what I think He revealed to me about what that work is. His work when He was here was to redeem and make disciples. Our work now is to fulfill our redemption's purpose by making disciples. This is the work that He said we would have His full backing with and His support. He is interceding right now on our behalf to the Father, so that we can do this great work. So, without saying much more, let's fulfill our purpose and go make disciples. After all, it is the greatest work we could ever do.