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John 14:7 - 14:14



Gospel of John - Steve Gregg

In John 14:7-14, Jesus makes one of His strongest declarations of deity, revealing the difficult-to-grasp concept of the Holy Trinity. He promises to send the Holy Spirit to empower believers to do even greater works than He performed, and that praying in His name will be powerful. However, He also emphasizes the importance of aligning requests with the Father's will. The speaker, Steve Gregg, notes that the activity of the Holy Spirit is essential to the growth and vitality of the church, and Christians should seek to be filled with the Spirit in all they do.

Transcript

We're turning back to John 14 now, and we had covered the first six verses, about which there was much to say, and there's plenty to say about the rest as well, though I think we'll move a little faster through the material tonight. Reading those verses again and beyond, let's start with the first verse. Let not your heart be troubled.

You believe in God? Believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions, or dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you.

I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go, you know, and the way you know.

And Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going, and how can we know the way? And Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.

And from now on, you know him, and have seen him. Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. Jesus said to him, Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father.

So how can you say, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak to you, I do not speak on my own authority, but

the Father who dwells in me does the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves. 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 will he do, because I go to my Father. And whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.

Now, in the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus has a number of themes that he revisits numerous times in chapters 14 and 15 and 16. One of those themes, of course, is the theme of his going away and coming again. He has brought it up in verse 3. He will bring it up again in verse 18.

He says, I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you. He'll bring it up in verse 19. He says, a little while, a little longer, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me.

Likewise, in verse 28, I am going away and coming back to you. So, there are many references to his going away, and in each case, with the promise that he will return to them. Now, this is, of course, the setting of this whole discourse.

Jesus was soon to be taken from them. This was the night before his crucifixion. He was later this evening arrested, and then crucified the next morning.

And that being so, the disciples had to be apprised of the change in circumstances that they were going to be facing. So, he says, well, first of all, you're going to lose me, but you're going to gain me back. And the exact meaning of that, we will examine more when we get to verses 15 and following, because he seems to clarify it after that point.

But there are other things he wants to tell them, too. One of the things he's going to tell them is that they can pray using his name. And another thing he wants to tell them is that he's going to send them another comforter.

These are some of the main themes that will come up in this chapter, and which will be repeated numerous times in the remainder of the discourse. But before we get to some of those repeated themes, and we will in verses 12 and following, there is this section, verses 7 through 11, where he says, If you had known me, you would have known my father also. And from now on you know him and have seen him.

From now on you have known him and seen him. Now, they had seen him already. They've seen Jesus, and that's what he's talking about.

Seen him is seeing the Father. But they have not known that. They have seen him, but they have not known him.

And from now on you will know him and see him. You will know that the one you've seen is he. And that is what he's saying, but they don't understand what he means.

And so Philip says, Well, Lord, just show us the Father and that'll be enough. That'll suffice. You've said we will have seen him from now on.

So are you going to pull back the curtain and let us see the Father? Are you going to show us the Father? That'd be great. That's all we would need. That's all we could ever long for.

That's sufficient for us. And Jesus said to him, Have I been with you so long? And yet have you not known me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father. So how can you say, Show us the Father? We have some of the strongest declarations of the deity of Christ right here.

And if people thought that Jesus has not specifically said, I am the Father here, they nonetheless have to take into consideration what it is that Jesus is saying. He's saying, You want to see the Father? How long have I been with you? And you don't know who I am. Now, that in itself, if he said nothing more than that, would be implying strongly that he is the Father and a very blasphemous thing for any man to imply, unless he is.

I mean, if you heard a pastor say, You want to see God? Who do you think you're looking at up here? I am God. I mean, that would be the implication. Have I been your pastor so long and you don't know who I am and you still need to see God after you've seen me? That'd be so brazen, so outlandish.

And so he went on and said, Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? Now, this is the doctrine of the co-inherence of the Father and the Son, that they are in each other. That is, of course, something that somehow has got to inform our views of the Trinity. If we have a view of the Trinity, which I do, then we have to understand that it is such that the Father and the Son are in each other.

I could understand how a child could be in its mother, that is, in the womb of the mother, but the mother could not be inside the child at the same time, because the smaller object goes inside the larger object, but the larger object cannot simultaneously be inside the smaller object. How could the Father be in the Son and the Son also be in the Father? Well, I suspect that since God is spirit, that we should use analogies that are more like liquid than like solid objects. And you can mix different liquids together and they co-inhere, they are within each other.

One is in the other and the other is in that other one. So that two objects or three or any number of liquids can be put together into each other. They make a blend, of course.

They make a blend of something else. If you put cream in your coffee, then the coffee is in the cream and the cream is in the coffee. They are in each other.

And they now are something a little different than either of them were by themselves. And yet, when you drink it, you can taste the part that is coffee and you can make it out. You can say, well this is good coffee or this is strong coffee or whatever.

You can tell the coffee flavor by itself. And you can also tell the cream flavor. I myself like very creamy coffee and when people serve me coffee with skim milk in it, I have no idea why anyone would put skim milk in coffee.

It does not even change the color. Even regular milk, even whole milk in it, it just is not creamy enough. And I can tell when I drink a cup of coffee whether it has got creamy enough cream in it.

And so can you, if you drink cream in your coffee. You can tell, though you have got one blend, you can make a distinction between the cream and the coffee, but you cannot extract them from each other. They co-inhere.

And if we understand the Trinity in those kinds of analogies, then we can say that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit all are, as it were, one in substance, but three in distinct characters. Three flavors, we might say. There is a distinction between them, but together they make one.

I have always found that a lot easier than trying to picture a committee of three and say, how are these people all one? How are these persons of the Godhead all one? But I think that we almost have to have something like that as our understanding if we are going to understand how the Father is in me and I am in the Father. Unless there is an alternative, and there is, that some people have taken, and that is that it means that I am in his heart and he is in my heart. In other words, that just means we love each other.

I could say that I am in my children's hearts or I am in my parents' hearts and they are in my heart, but that is not really saying anything more than that we love each other. It is not really telling you anything mysterious about us. Anyone I love would be in my heart in that sense.

I personally think that Jesus is revealing something much more difficult to grasp than just that. If we try to understand too well, the Trinity will probably be mixed up because I don't know if there is really any earthly analogy that fully works. But I, as I mentioned, have found that this verse in particular encourages me to think in terms of the properties of liquids rather than the properties of solids.

Of course, he is neither liquid nor solid. He is not matter, he is spirit. But spirit is likened in the Bible to water and to oil and in others to liquids.

That doesn't mean that spirit is liquid, but perhaps it is more like liquid than like solid in terms of how we are to envisage how that works. It is also likened to gases like wind, air

and so forth. Jesus is saying that the Father and I are in each other.

If you have seen me, therefore, you have already seen the Father. If you have had a taste of what it is like to listen to me and to see me and the way I act, that is the Father that you are seeing and hearing. Therefore, we know that Jesus came to reveal the Father to us in his own person.

If you think of God in the Bible and you think in terms of the Old Testament and you think of specific stories about God, there is a good chance that you will be thinking about stories that are maybe stories of his severity. The reason I think there is a good chance of that is because of the great number of people who bring this up to me and ask, how is it that God in the Old Testament is so severe and so judgmental, so wrathful? In the New Testament, Jesus is so other than that. The truth is that the God of the Old Testament is not wrathful.

He gets angry, as even good and gentle and patient people sometimes do. He is slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. That is what the Old Testament says about him many times.

He is a merciful God. He loved Israel with an everlasting love, although they did not love him back. He put up with a great deal.

He has a very long fuse. Yes, you do read about those cases in the Bible where he came to the end of his patience with somebody and had to do something to them. But parents come to the end of their patience sometimes with their children or maybe not the end of their patience so much as they just realize it is not doing the child any good or anyone else to leave a matter unaddressed.

He needs a severe intervention. The God of the Old Testament is sometimes mistaken to be a severe God because we read mostly of cases where his people are disobeying and we read many cases where he has to discipline or judge. A large portion of the Old Testament is the books of the prophets.

The prophets hardly ever came except to warn that God was angry. The prophets did not always speak but when they did it was usually God sent them because God was angry. So their message is a message of God's severity.

But if you read of the Old Testament and do not take into account the long periods of time between the specific stories of God's judgment and do not realize that there are hundreds and hundreds of years that he is putting up with generation after generation after generation of rebellious and obstinate and destructive people. Before he finally cracks down and lowers the boom on them then you will not have it in perspective. God is like Jesus and many people who are trying to envisage God picture him more like Jonathan Edwards pictured God in his sermon that sinners in the hands of an angry God.

But Jonathan Edwards apparently did not know much about God. I hate to say that because he is regarded to be one of America's greatest theologians and philosophers of all of American history. This is at least what Calvinists think about him.

Yet his most famous sermon, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, depicted God that is not anything at all like Jesus. In fact not even anything at all like God reveals himself in the Old Testament either. But nonetheless Jesus was a friend of sinners and he was patient and he got angry at religious people who were defiling the temple and misrepresenting God to the common people.

But he was gentle and patient with all and especially even with those who were fallen people. And Jesus said if you have seen me that is what the Father is like. That is why Jesus came.

So our misunderstandings about the Father unfortunately which continue to this day among people who do not read carefully and only heard a few Bible stories. Like Richard Dawkins who apparently has not really studied the Bible at all but is quite sure he understands the Old Testament God as a God who is misogynistic and a slave trader. He hates homosexuals, he is homophobic, he wipes out whole populations.

This is the God that Richard Dawkins describes and he thinks he is describing the God of the Old Testament. The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. Look at Jesus and you will see what the God of the Old Testament is like.

And Jesus is not without his angry moments. Jesus exhibits anger on occasion himself. And if you want to see the most unleashed anger of Jesus in any place in the Bible look at the book of Revelation.

Where you read about the wrath of him that sits on the throne and of the Lamb. The Lamb is Jesus, the wrath of the Lamb. So Jesus is both good and severe.

He is more patient than any of us would be but he is also a perfect judge. And he will judge sin more perfectly than any human judge ever does or any human court. And so Jesus is the perfect image of God to us.

And that is what he said, if you have seen me you have seen the Father. What it says about him in Hebrews chapter 1 as that book opens. Hebrews 1 verses 1-3 it says, God who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets has in these last days spoken to us by his Son whom he has appointed heir of all things through whom also he made the worlds who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person.

Jesus he is talking about here. Jesus is the brightness of God's glory. He is the express image of God's person.

In Colossians chapter 1 and verse 15 Paul said, He is the image of the invisible God. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. You can't see the invisible God but you can see the image of him that he has sent down to portray himself to us in Jesus.

So Jesus can say if you have seen me you have seen the Father. And that is because the Father is in me and I am in the Father. And we are one.

Now he doesn't say in this passage we are one. Of course over in chapter 10 we already encountered that statement of Jesus where he said the Father and I are one. All in chapter 10 and verse 30.

Although that statement could easily be misunderstood. It's not really talking about the nature of the Trinity. It's talking more about Jesus and the Father being on the same mission and of the same mind.

But here he tells us that he is in the Father and the Father in him so that to see him is no different than seeing the Father. And he says the words I speak in verse 10. I don't speak on my own initiative or my own authority.

But the Father who dwells in me does the works. Notice the words and the works put here together. Two things Jesus is famous for.

What he said and what he did. His words and his works. He says neither of those things are really mine.

The things I have spoken are not really me. They are not mine. They are my Father saying them.

This is not the first time that Jesus said this because there was a time earlier in John where it says the people marveled and said where did this man get his knowledge? This is over in chapter 7 and verse 15. It says in John 7, 15. And the Jews marveled saying how does this man know his letters having never studied? And Jesus answered in verse 16.

He answered them and said my teaching is not mine. But his who sent me. He says if anyone wants to do his will he shall know concerning the teaching.

Whether it is from God or whether I speak on my own authority. Now he says here to the disciples in the upper room. I don't speak on my own authority.

It comes from my Father. That's why if you want to see the Father and hear the Father. Just listen to me.

You are hearing his words come out of my mouth. And if you see what I do you are seeing what God does. That's what he says in the second part of that.

The end of verse 10. But the Father who dwells in me does the works. The Father is doing his works through me.

The Father is speaking his words through me. Giving his teachings through me. Everything you can observe about me.

Whether it is what I am doing or what I am saying. Is an exhibition of the Father because he is just doing those things through me. Jesus when he came to earth.

It says in Philippians chapter 2. Emptied himself. In Philippians chapter 2 it says. That Jesus existed beforehand.

In the form of God. But he did not consider being like God a thing to be grasped. He didn't cling to that.

Instead it says he made himself. Of no reputation. The New King James and the King James.

Actually that long phrase made himself of no reputation. Is in the Greek just two words. He emptied himself.

And he emptied himself. Taking the form of a servant. And coming in the likeness of men.

Now Jesus when he came to earth. He emptied himself. He was in the form of God.

But then he emptied himself. That is the Greek word kenosis. And the idea of Jesus.

Laying aside his divine privileges. To become man is called kenosis theory. And so Jesus emptied himself.

And he became a man. But everything he did and said was done by the father. Who dwelt in him.

And he says and the same can be true of us. In verse 11 he says believe me that I am in the father. In the father in me.

Okay just like I said. Or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves. If you don't believe me just saying so.

Then look at the works and see whether they are the works of God or not. Already earlier he had said. If I am not doing the works of my father.

Then don't believe me. If the works I am doing don't resemble the things that God has always done. That are in character with God.

Don't believe me. But if I am then believe that the father is in me. And I am in the father

for the works sake.

If for nothing else. Now verse 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. There is many difficulties with this verse.

One of which is that it seems to be a general statement. About anyone who believes in him. That would be everyone in this room I trust.

And every Christian who genuinely believes in him. And so if this is a statement about every Christian. Then we need to understand what it is that is said about every Christian.

He that believes in me. Shall do the same works I do. And greater works than I do.

He will do the works I do. And greater works than I do. Now the works that we often think of Jesus doing are.

Healing the sick. Raising the dead. Maybe walking on water.

Turning water to wine. These works that Jesus did. Are we supposed to be doing them? And is every Christian supposed to do them? And if these are the kinds of works he is talking about.

What could it possibly mean? To do greater works than these? What can be greater than raising the dead? What can be greater than cleansing a leper? Opening the eyes of the blind? Or walking on water? Are Christians supposed to even try to imagine things more great than these miracles? And then expect to do them? I'm a long way off from even just doing those things. Much less anything greater than that. And I'll have to tell you the truth.

As I understand the book of Acts. And the New Testament in general. I don't think that I will probably be doing those things.

Not regularly anyway. If God ever has me do any kind of a miracle in the future. It will probably be not characteristic.

Probably a special event. Whereas Jesus did miracles all the time. It's from this verse and not much else.

That many people get the impression that all Christians are supposed to go around. And heal the sick and raise the dead. And do all the things Jesus did.

And yet even in the New Testament. This wasn't precisely how it was. Now the apostles did those things.

And perhaps one could argue that since Jesus is in a private conversation with his apostles. That when he says he that believes in me. He means of you in the room.

Any of you. He among you who believes in me. That is through faith you my apostles.

Will duplicate my miracles. And that is possible. I mean the wording can be understood that way.

And it takes the heat off a little bit of the rest of us. I think well what's wrong with me. I haven't cured one leper in my whole lifetime.

And so we could say well this might be just to the apostles. But I don't think it'd be just to the apostles. It may indeed be primarily to the apostles.

With and it may extend out to others who have ministries of a similar sort. Because in the book of Acts. You do find miracles being done.

Of the same sort that Jesus did. But almost always they're done by the apostles. I say almost because there are at least a couple of exceptions if not three.

In the New Testament we read again and again that the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of Jesus. And great signs and wonders were wrought by the hands of the apostles. We read that Paul when he went to Ephesus in Acts 19.

Says special miracles were done. At the hands of Paul. So that even aprons.

And sweat bands. Were taken from Paul. From his body and given to people who were sick or demon possessed.

And the sick were healed and the demon possessed were delivered. By receiving these articles from Paul. Now it does say in Acts 19.11. That these were special miracles.

In other words Paul didn't do this kind of thing all the time. These weren't regular miracles. This was a special thing God was doing through Paul.

In Ephesus that he didn't do through Paul everywhere he went. Nor through all the apostles everywhere they went. Now Jesus did that kind of thing.

We don't have him sending out handkerchiefs and so forth. But Jesus could heal at a distance. Jesus could just command that someone be healed who he never laid eyes on.

Who was in the next town. And the person would be healed. So even these special miracles that Paul did could not be said to be greater works than what Jesus did.

Now in the book of Acts. In addition to the apostles. There are three other known cases of people working miracles.

One was Philip. Philip and Stephen were both what we would call deacons. They were of the seven that were chosen to wait on tables.

But they also ended up having evangelistic and apologetics ministries. Backed up with miracles. We read of Stephen doing miracles in Acts chapter 6. We read of Philip doing miracles in Acts chapter 8. And then in chapter 9 we read of Ananias.

A brother in Damascus who came and laid his hands on Saul. So that he could receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. After he had been blinded on the road.

So those three cases besides the apostles. Are the only actual recorded cases in the New Testament. Of persons working miracles other than the apostles.

So clearly it was primarily an apostolic work. Which could spill over to others if God wished. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12.

That there are many gifts of the Spirit. And one of the gifts he listed. He said to one is given the working of miracles.

To another faith. To another prophecy. To another discerning of spirits.

But to one person. That is some people. The working of miracles is given.

Obviously Stephen and Philip. Were among those that had that gift. Besides the apostles.

But it must have been relatively rare. Even in the first century church. For people to be miracle workers.

And have the gift of miracles. Because Paul could speak about such miracles. In 2 Corinthians 12.

As being the signs of an apostle. In 2 Corinthians 12. Paul is reminding the Corinthians.

Of his ministry among them. Which was not too far distant in the past. At the time of his writing.

And he said surely the signs of an apostle. Were wrought among you. In all signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

He spoke about the signs and wonders. That work as apostolic signs. In other words.

Proof that he was an apostle. If miracles were widely done. By Christians.

Other than the apostles. Then such miracles could hardly serve. As a sign of apostleship.

And while some people. Other than apostles. Like Stephen and Philip.

And a few others. Might have had the gift of working miracles. Mostly the apostles did.

It was probably. Primarily an apostolic thing. So that they could actually speak of such things.

As confirming a man's claim. To apostleship. And that he was widely done.

I don't know that he could possibly mean. Greater miracles than he did. Just because if you catalog.

All the miracles of Jesus. It's hard even to imagine greater miracles. And although there are some pretty.

Stupendous miracles in the Old Testament. That Jesus never performed. Like making the sun stand still.

Or making it not rain for three. And a half years. Or making the Red Sea.

Park and dry land to appear. Jesus didn't do those specific things. To make it split.

And turn it into dry ground. He could just walk on top of it. He did command the weather.

He didn't stop the rain for three and a half years. But he did stop a particular storm. With his command.

I mean Jesus did just about every kind of miracle. That one could imagine. Except for silly things.

Everything Jesus did was reasonable. Everything he did was helpful. He fed hungry people.

Healed sick people. Everything he did. Either were helpful.

Or at least symbolic. In teaching some spiritual lesson. Like when he cursed the fig tree.

What then would greater works than his be? Now he didn't say miraculous works. And that's what we often think he's talking about. We think of the great works Jesus did.

We think of his miracles. But works simply means. What a person does in general.

His activities. His actions are his works. And Jesus works were not only those.

Of healing the sick and so forth. But he actually did much of that. To confirm the word that he preached.

He was primarily a proclaimer. Of the kingdom of God. His miracles were there to confirm.

That the kingdom of God had come. He said if I'm casting out demons. By the spirit of God.

Then the kingdom of God has come. You can see from my activities. That the kingdom of God has come.

He said so that you might know. That the son of man has power on earth. To forgive sins.

He said to the man. Who was sick of palsy. Arise and walk.

So Jesus did these miracles. To confirm his message. He was primarily the messenger.

Not the miracle worker. The miracles were a corollary. Of his proclaiming the kingdom of God.

Now Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God. But he only did it for less than three days. Three years.

Publicly. And he never did it outside of his Jewish communities. He never went to the Gentiles.

The apostles however. Would duplicate his works of preaching. And confirm with signs following.

But they would do it on a much larger scale. Than he would. He had only had a very limited exposure.

He had traveled a limited amount. He had preached to a smallish number of people. Thousands yes.

But still smallish. Compared to what the apostles would later do. They would reach whole cities.

And whole countries. Beyond the place where Jesus would. And of course if we include the gifted evangelists.

And missionaries of the church. Since that time. Well they've reached millions.

In fact billions. Of people with the gospel. The dissemination of the gospel.

Was the primary work. That Jesus had come to do. The works of miracles and so forth.

Were the confirmation of his message. The apostles would go out. And do the same work Jesus did.

They would preach the gospel. And they would confirm their message. With signs following.

That's what it says in the last verse of Mark 16. Mark 16 20 says that the disciples went everywhere. Preaching the gospel.

The Lord working with them. Confirming their word. With signs following.

So just as the father confirmed the words of Jesus. By giving signs and wonders. So Jesus confirmed the words of the apostles.

By giving signs and wonders. They did the work that Jesus did. But they did it in a bigger way.

They did greater works than Jesus did. Now some of the things Jesus did. Could not be equaled.

Or certainly could not be exceeded. Like the work of saving mankind. Of redeeming mankind with his own death.

The apostles didn't do that. Although they did see their own sufferings. As a continuation of that work.

Remember what Paul said. Over in Colossians chapter 1. Many people puzzle over this statement of Paul. It's peculiar.

Paul's talking about how much he suffers. And in Colossians 1 24. He says I now rejoice in my sufferings for you.

And fill up in my flesh. What is lacking in the afflictions of Christ. For the sake of his body.

Which is the church. Now Paul says in my flesh. He means in his bodily life.

He fills up what is lacking of the sufferings of Christ. For the sake of the church. It's like Paul sees the suffering of Christ.

Is not quite finished yet. Because the suffering of Christ. Will continue as long as his people suffer.

Remember Paul got a divine revelation about that. When he was the persecutor. And Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus.

Why are you persecuting me? Now Saul was not aware of persecuting Jesus personally. He thought he was persecuting the disciples of Jesus. But we know that Jesus said.

Elsewhere in as much as you do it to the least of these my brethren. You do it to me. You do something to my body.

You did it to me. You do it to my hand or my foot or my toe. You've done it to me.

And when you hurt Christians. You're hurting Jesus. Now Paul in Damascus.

Got that directly from the horse's mouth. Jesus said. Why are you persecuting me? And so he realized.

Christians who are persecuted. Are Christ being persecuted? His body is still suffering. What for? Shouldn't his suffering have been completed at the cross? Well for the propitiation of sins.

Yes. Jesus alone suffered for propitiation. But we suffer for propagation.

That is to propagate the gospel. Jesus still will face opposition. There is still suffering that Jesus faces.

In the persecution of his people. And Paul apparently was speaking. As if he believed.

That there's a sum total of suffering. That Jesus through his church. Must suffer before the job is done.

And Paul was glad to take his share of that. I'll take that load. The more I think of it.

The more of the load is taken off someone else. If there's a certain amount of suffering. Sum total.

That Christians have to suffer. That Christ has to suffer. Before the world is reached.

And the kingdom of God is spread to every nation. Well let me take my share. I rejoice to fill up in my body.

Whatever portion I can. Of what is lacking. In what Christ has to suffer.

For the sake of the church. So. Even the work of suffering.

For the propagation of the gospel. Is something the apostles took on. They continue.

Suffering. Doing the work of suffering. Christ suffered for our salvation.

But he still suffers for the salvation. Of people who have not heard the gospel yet. They have to hear it.

And therefore the apostles. Continued the same work that Jesus did. And so do some of us.

I mean. I don't believe that this. He that believes in me.

Means every Christian necessarily. I believe that he was speaking primarily. To those in the room.

Of you people here who believe in me. Because he was calling on them specifically. To believe in the previous verse.

In verse 11 he says. Believe me. That I'm in the father and the father in me.

Or else believe me for the sake of the works. And he who believes me. He's talking to them.

Urging them to believe me. We'll be doing the same works. You see the works I've done.

Believe me on the basis of those works. And expect to do them yourself. Expect to do the same thing yourself.

That's what you're going to be doing while I'm gone. In fact I will be continuing to do them. Through you.

Because you'll be my hands and feet. You'll be my body. And that is what Luke was thinking.

When he wrote the book of Acts. Because in Acts chapter 1. And verse 1. Luke alludes to his. Book which is the gospel of Luke.

Now the gospel of Luke. Began with. It began before Jesus was born.

And ended after his resurrection. So it encompasses the story. The whole story of the life of Jesus on earth.

And speaking of that document. Luke says. The former account I made.

O Theophilus. Of all that Jesus began. Both to do and teach.

Until the day in which he was taken up. Etc. Now notice he's talking about the book of Luke.

He says. In that book I covered all that Jesus began. To do and teach.

Again what he said and what he did. His works and his words. In the book of Luke he says.

I began to tell the story about. What Jesus began to do and teach. By implication he's saying.

And in this volume. I'm going to talk about what he continued. To do and teach.

But he's gone to heaven now. So he's going to continue doing and teaching. Through his church.

And that's the story I'm here to tell you. My first book was about Jesus. Earthly presence on earth.

That was the beginning of his ministry. After his ascension. The other part of his ministry

was.

He acts through his people. It's his body. They are him.

And so Jesus said. You've seen the works I've done. You're going to do the same works.

You're going to continue those works. Because I go to my father. There's two possible implications.

One is because I'll be gone. You'll have to continue my work. Because I'm going away.

I'm going home. I'm going back to my father. So you'll do the works I've been doing.

Because I'm going to be gone. And someone's got to do it. So it'll be you.

That's one of the implications. Because I go to my father. You'll do these works.

But the other is. Because I'm going to my father. So the other part Starting at verse 15.

He starts introducing the idea of sending the Holy Spirit. Verses 15-17. Are the first of four or five passages in the Upper Room discourse.

That are called Paraclete passages. We may or may not get to any of them tonight. The point is.

to the Father, I can send you this other comforter. If I don't go, He won't come. And because I am going, He will come.

And therefore, because He will come and you will receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit, then that is why you will do the works I've done. I will continue to do them through my Spirit through you. That's what He's saying, because I go to my Father.

So, again, He's trying to communicate to them the implications and the ramifications of His going away. They have not wished for Him to go away. They had not even known He was going to go away.

He's talking very openly about leaving them, and they're saying, what? Where are you going? We don't understand. We thought you were the Messiah. Aren't you supposed to drive out the Romans and set up the kingdom? What are you doing? What are you talking about going away? And He's saying, well, I am going away, but you will be taking my place here.

The Holy Spirit will be given to you. My Spirit will be given to you, and you will then take over the work I've been doing. And you'll do the same work, only more of it.

You'll accomplish more than I did in my lifetime in terms of the spreading of the kingdom

of God. And He adds this in verse 13, another consolation. And whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If you ask anything in my name, I will do it. Now, technically, this was only spoken to the apostles, the same people that were told that they'd do greater works than He did. But I don't know that it would be fair to limit it to the apostles.

Certainly, the whole church bears the name of Christ, and is therefore allowed to pray in His name. But what does it mean to pray in His name? You know, verse 14, some manuscripts have an added word, which I think you'll find if you have the New American Standard or the NIV or something like that. In verse 14, some manuscripts read, if you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

Now, the manuscript evidence for the inclusion of the word me and for the exclusion of the word me is about equal. As far as the manuscript weight goes, the manuscripts that contain it are about as weighty as the ones that don't contain it. It's kind of a wash in terms of the weight of the manuscript evidence.

However, logically, it should be omitted, the word me, because you don't ask me in my name. And this is something that Christians have misunderstood, because it's common for Christians to pray, etc., etc., etc., and we ask this in your name. Who are you asking? Well, I guess I'm asking Jesus.

So, you're asking Jesus in Jesus' name? What does that mean? I don't know, I just was taught to pray that way. Well, maybe you're praying to the Father. So, are you praying to the Father in the Father's name? What are you talking about when you say, I'm asking you in your name? Well, it's not really understanding what it means to ask in the name of Jesus.

You don't ask Jesus something in his name, and therefore, you know, what if you ask me in my name is a nonsensical statement in verse 14. Therefore, the manuscripts that omit it certainly must be correct. Let me show you why, because before this discourse is over, he goes into some detail about praying in his name in chapter 16, and he says in verse 23 of chapter 16, John 16, 23, in that day you will ask me nothing.

Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. Now, you're not going to be asking me. You're going to be asking my Father in my name.

You're not going to ask the Father in the Father's name or ask Jesus in Jesus' name. You're going to ask the Father in Jesus' name. He says, until now you've asked nothing in my name.

Ask, and you will receive that your joy may be full. And then in verse 26, he says, in that day you will ask in my name. Ask who? Well, two verses earlier, he said, ask my Father.

You'll ask my Father in my name. Okay, you will ask, we could insert the Father, because that's what he said in verse 23, in my name. And I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loves you, because you've loved me and have believed that I came forth from God.

Now, many people believe that they should pray to Jesus. Other people believe they should pray to the Father through Jesus, and through Jesus means to them, I'll talk to Jesus and he can go talk to the Father about it for me. I actually read a book by a very famous Christian leader when I was about 12 years old or so, and he actually explained it that way.

He says, you know, if I wanted to, you know, if I had a request to make of the President of the United States, I doubt that I could get an audience with him. He's got more important people to attend to, and I'm nobody. But he said, if I was a personal friend of his son, then his son could go to him for me.

I could talk to my friend, and he could talk to his dad, because his son would always have access to his Father. And so I got the impression that that's what he was saying, that we pray to the Father, not by speaking to the Father, but by speaking to Jesus. We pray to Jesus and he will go for us and talk to the Father.

That's exactly what Jesus said he's not going to do. He said, you will ask in my name and I do not say that I will ask the Father for you. That's not what's going to happen here.

I'm not going to go to the Father for you. You go to him yourself. The Father loves you.

That's the whole point. Jesus did not come to be a buffer between us and the Father, as many people assume. He came to bring us to the Father.

That's what he said in John 14.6, no one comes to the Father but through me. But through me you do come to the Father. That's the whole point.

The whole point of Jesus' mission was that of explaining the prodigal son, getting the son to come back to the Father. Alienated children need to be restored to their Father. That's what Jesus came to do, to bring people back to God, back to the Father.

Not to replace God in their minds and in their relationship, but to be the way by which they come to the Father. Now what does that mean? Remember Paul said there's one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. Well that sounds to us like maybe I talk to Jesus, he talks to the Father.

That's not what a mediator is. A mediator is at the same table with both parties. We come to the Father through Jesus, but he doesn't go instead of us.

It is through the merits of Christ that are given to us that we have access to the Father.

Christ is there all the time. He's our intercessor.

He's the one who commends us to God. He's the one who's authorized us to come in there. He's the one whose name we bear because we are of his flesh and of his bones, we're members of his body.

His name is ours. When we come before God, Jesus is coming before God because we are his body, we are his flesh and his bones. We come in the person of Christ, in the authority of Christ, authorized by him, praying as he would pray.

That's what praying in Jesus' name means, just like acting in anyone else's name means. You act as they would act under their authorization. They give you power of attorney or whatever, and you sign documents for them, and you buy things for them, and you sell things for them, and you do business for them, and you're acting in their name, which means their full credit is behind you.

Their finances are behind you. Their reputation is behind you. Their authority is behind you.

They've authorized you to act in their name, but of course it means that you're only supposed to do the things that they want done. You don't take their credit and their authority and their finances and go out and do your own selfish thing. You're acting on their behalf.

That's what it means to act in someone's name. So when we pray in Jesus' name, it means that we pray such things as he would approve of praying. We pray such things as he himself would pray, and we do so with the recognition that the Father sees that Christ's authority, Christ's access belongs to us.

The Father accepts us into his presence as if it were Christ himself. He said, I'm not going to go to the Father for you. You go to him.

The Father loves you. You will ask the Father yourself in my name. Now you don't come to somebody and speak in their own name to them.

What does that mean? It doesn't make any sense at all. So in John 14, those manuscripts that have Jesus saying, if you ask me anything in my name, are making a nonsensical statement and one that totally disagrees with what Jesus said two chapters later in chapter 16 and verse 23 when he says, in that day you will ask me nothing. You'll ask the Father in my name.

Yet if you look at John 14 verses 13 and 14, it's Jesus who will do the thing that is asked. And maybe that's why some copyist, some scribe or something added the word me to verse 14. Because he says in verse 13, whatever you ask, he means the Father, in my name that I will do.

Since he says I will do it, one might get the impression, well, he must be the one we're asking. We're asking Jesus because he said he's the one who will do it. He said in verse 14 too, if you ask anything in my name, I will do it.

So maybe that's why people assume that we're praying to Jesus because he's the one who's going to act in response to our prayers. There's a sense in which it probably doesn't make a whole lot of difference because Jesus said I'm in the Father and the Father is in me. If you're praying to Jesus, although it's not what he said to do, in fact, it's contrary to what he said to do, it probably isn't that big a deal.

But what is, is that Jesus wants God's alienated children to come back to God. Paul said that God has reconciled the world to himself in Christ, not holding their transgressions or their sins against them, their offenses against them, and has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation. He says so we stand in Christ's stead and declare to you, be reconciled to God.

That's the closing verses of 2 Corinthians 5. The apostles stand in Christ's place and they beg people to be reconciled to God because that's what Jesus is trying to get us to do and they're acting in his name. And so he's telling the disciples here that they will have his name. Now he hasn't explained the background basis for all of these promises, namely that the promise that he will come again and be with them, the promise that they will have power like his and will conduct his works as he conducted the Father's works, and the fact that they will have Jesus' name and God will honor that.

Now what is the basis of all three of those promises? It's that the Holy Spirit is coming. He said in the next section, I'm going to send you another comforter. This is the spirit of truth.

He calls him in verse 17 the spirit of truth. In verse 26 he calls him the Holy Spirit, the paraclete, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name. Now the coming of the Holy Spirit is the coming of Christ's Spirit to dwell in us.

And he actually explains that in the verses that follow, though we don't have time to look at them tonight. We will next time. But it is the coming of the Holy Spirit to dwell in the Christians, in the church, that is the sense in which Christ comes and is with us at all times.

He says, lo, I'm with you always, even into the end of the age in Matthew 28. He means His Spirit. He, in His Spirit, is always with us.

And when he says in verse 18, I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you. In the context, he's talking about the Holy Spirit. This is just the summary of the statement about I'll send you the spirit of truth.

I'll send you another helper. I will come to you in that way, in that form, through the Holy

Spirit coming, the Spirit of Christ. It is also the Holy Spirit that will enable them to do the works of Christ that He's promised.

It is also the Holy Spirit that entitles us to pray in the name of Jesus. Remember, Paul says, praying in the Spirit, praying in the Holy Spirit. Jude says, build yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit that's given to us is the one who enables us and entitles us to pray in Jesus' name. Why? Because when the Holy Spirit is given to us, we become part of the body of Jesus. The Holy Spirit places us in the body of Christ.

And it is the possession of the Spirit of Christ that makes us His body. You see, when Jesus was on earth, He said, the Father gave Him, Jesus, the Spirit without measure. But when He left, He gave His Spirit to us and each of us has a measure.

Each of us is a part. The body collectively possesses the Holy Spirit in the same sense and embodies and enshrines the Holy Spirit in the same sense that Jesus' one body did when He was on earth. But the church is His body now.

And it is the possession of the Holy Spirit that makes the church the body of Christ. Just like your human spirit is what identifies you and every part of your body is you. Your human spirit is sensed by you only in your head.

But the same spirit is that which animates your whole body. When your spirit is gone, your body is dead. That is what it says in James.

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also, James said in James chapter 2. When your spirit is gone, you are dead. All the parts of your body are dead because your human spirit animates and vitalizes every part of your body. When the spirit is gone, the whole body is dead.

Not one cell is alive. Because it is the sharing in your spirit that makes each part of your body part of you, part of your life, part of your person. And it is the Holy Spirit given to us collectively as a church that makes us the body of Christ.

It is our status as the body of Christ that gives us access to God in Christ's name because we are Him. We are His body. He has given His name to us because we are a part of Him.

All these promises that Jesus has made, three of them so far, that He will come again to comfort them, that they will be empowered to do the works He has done, and that they will be authorized to speak in His name and to pray in His name and to have answers to prayer that are offered in His name, these promises are all made by the coming of the Holy Spirit. That is the next thing He mentions in verses 15-17, but we will have to wait on that. It becomes the main theme of the remainder of the Discourse.

He comes back to it, there are about five different paragraphs about the Paraclete, and everything else He says is related to the subject. In other words, what He is saying is there is going to be a sea change here in the way the Kingdom of God is administrated. I am the King, I have been here all the time since you have known me, He says.

I have been here ministering, I have been the body of Christ, I have been the temple of the Holy Spirit, I have been the one who did the works of God, that God was in me, and I did the works of God and I spoke the words of God. I was all that myself, now I am leaving, and you are going to be that now. All of you, collectively, the body, you are going to take over where I left off, and that is going to be possible only because everything I have done, I have done through the Holy Spirit.

I have cast out demons by the Spirit of God, I have given instructions through the Spirit of God, these are what the Bible says about Jesus, He operated through the Spirit of God. He says, now I am going to go and give you that Spirit, then you will be me here. You will be my extension on earth, and therefore all these things that I have promised you will be true because this other Comforter will come to you, this Spirit.

That is what will make you different, that is what will define your unique mission on earth as a church. And it is really a sad thing too, because, I mean what is sad is what has happened since then, because the early church did embody Jesus when the Holy Spirit came. When the Holy Spirit came, they did all the things Jesus did.

When Peter and John were arrested, it says the Sanhedrin looked on them and said they could tell that they had been with Jesus. They were people who were Christ-like, and the whole community of Christians was Christ-like, and so it was a testimony to the world, and the gospel went forth in power, because there was this testimony of the church as a whole, not primarily verbal testimony, but it is life testimony, embodying Jesus, demonstrating Jesus in their relationships. And yet what became later of the church was, when it became institutionalized, when it became an organization rather than a body, an organization instead of an organism, it became possible to run it like a machine.

You could run it like a corporation. You could have a flow chart that defines who answers to whom, and have a big organized thing, and it runs like a well-oiled machine. You don't even need a Holy Spirit anymore.

You can just keep the business of the church going in a polished, smooth-operating, organizational way. And it's always easier to do that than to walk in the Spirit. And therefore, no surprise that over the centuries, the church moved from this spiritual fellowship, this spiritual entity, into an organization that just was like a worldly corporation.

And instead of having the Spirit of God energizing many of its ministers, many of its ministers instead were just trained in seminaries how to do the work of the church, how

to run the machine. And they learned it just like they could have learned how to be an architect, or how to be a medical doctor, or how to be a plumber, just how to use the tools of the trade to run the machinery. And so the church became more like a machine than a family, more like an organization than like a body.

And the Spirit was not needed anymore. And so, because they didn't really seek the Spirit, and they became unspiritual, they began to make up theologies that we don't really need to seek the Spirit, because that's just automatic. Everybody just has the Spirit who's a Christian, and therefore you don't need to seek the power of the Spirit.

Everything we do organizationally is the power of the Spirit. And yet it doesn't look very much like the activity of the Spirit in the book of Acts, or in Jesus. And so what we've got is we've settled for a mechanistic idea of a church, instead of a body idea of a church, where the Spirit of the head has to animate every member of the body.

And this is what Jesus was telling them was going to be put together, and he was right, it did happen that way. It's just so sad now, in retrospect, seeing how the church has moved from that, and not seeing the essential nature of the filling of the Holy Spirit to actually do the work that Christians are called to do. And this is where Jesus is first laying that out to the disciples.

They really didn't have any concept of this before now, and that's perhaps why there's such a long discourse to try to hammer it into their heads. This would be his last chance to do so. Well, after his resurrection, I suppose he could do it again, but they needed to get through the crisis that was immediately coming first.

And so he was basically giving them all these different consolations that they would need at the time when he leaves them. We'll stop there. We will pick it up at verse 15 next time.