

Believing For Greater Things

Teaching given by Peter Warren at FGPC, January-February 2014

1. Believing In The God Who Is Greater

As I was waiting on the Lord a few weeks ago for the theme of this series of teaching, and the theme of 2014, I believe the Lord prompted me to begin reading through the Gospel of John. As I read one word kept being highlighted to me time and again through the chapters – this was the word greater. As I meditated on the verses where I kept reading this word, God began to deal with me about believing for greater things this coming year.

But first of all I want to lay a foundation to the study, and on this I will build 'line upon line, precept upon precept' as is my manner

John 10.29

“My Father gave my sheep to Me. **He is greater than all**, and no person can steal My sheep out of My hand” (NCV)

Before we can go on and believe God for greater things we must come to the place where we whole-heartedly believe that **God is greater than all**.

- He is greater than any trouble or trial you are facing at this present time.
- He is greater than sin; failure; sickness and pain; poverty and lack
- He is greater than any king, government and authority

God has given Jesus you and me and no person or thing can take us out of His hand.

Paul said in Romans 8 that he is totally convinced and persuaded that there is absolutely nothing that can separate us from the love that God has for us. Why, because he knew that God was greater than all and was with him.

“If God is for us, who can be against us?... Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (vss 31,37-39)

Abraham was of the same persuasion -

“He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform” (Romans 4.20-21)

The apostle John put it like this:

“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them (*agents of the antichrist – those things that are against and contrary to the purpose, plan and will of God*) because **He who is in you is greater** than he who is in the world” 1 John 4.4

The opponents of Jesus could not accept this about Him and challenged Him on the subject

John 8.53

“Do you think you are greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died, too. Who do you think you are?” (NCV)

Jesus went on to say (vs58) - “Most assuredly (without any doubt/you can take it to the bank/you can pin all your hopes on this), I say to you, before Abraham was I AM”

I want us to go on and look at something God said to Abraham, but first let's turn to another Scripture which is foundational to our understanding this theme.

Hebrews 11.6

“But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that He is* a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (KJV/NKJV)

For me, this is a verse that really has to be understood from the AV or NKJV. Almost all modern translations translate the second phrase as “*for those who come to God must believe that He exists..*”

This is not an erroneous translation as the word employed here supports it, however I would suggest that those of us that approach God must believe in more than the existence of God, we must believe in what I call the is-ness of God.

To believe in the is-ness of God is to believe that God is who He says He is, and who He has revealed Himself to be. **We don't just believe in God, we believe God.**

We have just looked at the Scripture where Jesus said 'before Abraham was, I AM'

God revealed Himself to Moses as I AM. The Great I AM sent Moses into Egypt with an important message for His children and for the Pharaoh.

Exodus 3.13-15

Names were extremely important to those in Egypt. The names of the Pharaohs and the Egyptian gods were permanently etched into the stone of their temples, sacred places and tombs. And Moses pre-empts this by asking God *Who shall I say has sent me?*

But in case this name I AM caused them so puzzlement or amusement, God continues by saying to Moses

“Tell them the LORD, the God of their fathers Abraham, Isaac, Jacob .. this is my name forever” (v15)

LORD – this is the name translated as Jehovah or Yahweh and means the Self Existing One. This name is derived from the Hebrew word for the verb 'to be' and when translated in the first person it becomes “I am I am” The name Jehovah refers to a God who is continuously becoming.

Moses was being sent into a nation that worshipped many gods, where even the Pharaohs were often elevated as gods, and Moses went in with this message that the One True Self Existing God had sent him.

Now let's turn to Abraham

Genesis 17.1-2

In these verses God reveals Himself to Abram by the name *El Shaddai*. This is one of

the compound names of God, of which there many more. It takes *EI* the shortened form of Elohim and compounds it with Shaddai, the word for Almighty, hence the meaning of the name – Almighty God.

Although they are two separate words, *shaddai* is similar and close to the word *shad* which means 'of the breast' thus signifying that He is all that they need. A baby receives all that is sufficient for life, health and growth from its mother's breast.

God chose to reveal Himself by this name while Abram was facing a very difficult challenge. They had been promised a child but 24 years on and there was still no sign of that promised child.

- God reassures him that He is all that they need – He is Almighty God, the All Sufficient One.
- The God who is greater than the need – He is greater than the barrenness of Sarah's womb
- He is greater than all of their understanding and comprehension
- He is greater than all of their restlessness, frustrations and confusion

God needed to instill this into Abraham because there would be more trials to come in the future where he would need to stand in faith on this truth.

If we are believing for greater things to come this year, we need to make sure we believe this truth – God is greater than all.

2. God's Word First Place

As we develop this theme we must keep in mind that we must be totally persuaded and convinced that God is greater than anything else.

- He is greater than any trouble or trial you are facing at this present time.
- He is greater than sin; failure; sickness and pain; poverty and lack (not just finance but, of love, joy, peace)
- He is greater than any king, government and authority

John 7.46

“The guards answered, 'The words He says are greater than the words of any other person who has ever spoken!’” (NCV)

A. God and His Word are Inseparable

John 10.29-30

In our text verse we were looking at last week we saw that Jesus spoke and said: “My Father.. He is greater than all”. But then in the next verse (John 10.30) Jesus made another statement which angered and offended His hearers so that they took up stones to kill Him – He said “The Father and I are one”

God is greater than all but in this verse Jesus says that He is as great as the Father – He is one with the Father – he is equal with God – He is God

No man ever spoke like Jesus:

- His words were with authority and power – Luke 4.32, 36
- His listeners marvelled at His words – Matthew 22.22

- His disciples were astonished at His words – Mark 10.24
- They were amazed at His words – Luke 4.36
- His words were gracious words – Luke 4.22
- His words had the power to heal the sick – Matthew 8.8,16
- His word makes us clean – John 15.3; Ephesians 5.26
- He only spoke what heard the Father say – John 8.26,28; John 12.49-50

Since therefore, Jesus is equal to God, and He only spoke the things He heard of His Father – His Word is God's Word and God's Word is His Word – Jesus is the Word of God.

God and His Word are inseparable

John 1.1

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”

B. God's Word Is His Will & His Will Is His Word

Because God and His Word cannot be separated, we find all that God is, is contained in His Word.

- His Word reveals the nature and character of God – everything we need to know about God, His nature, His character has already been spoken and given to us. We get to know God through His Word
- His Word reveals to us His will – the Bible is divided into two parts, the Old & New Testaments. A testament is a legal declaration of someone's will, purpose and intent; a covenant. God's Word is His revealed will for us.
- How can I know God's will? A question often asked – get to know God's word. For His Word is His will & His will is His Word.

C. God Has Magnified His Word Above His Holy Name

Psalm 138.2

“I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your Word above all Your name”

- In the last lesson we looked at how God revealed Himself through His names – it was through His covenant names that he made known His will to the patriarchs – He would be their Redeemer, Deliverer, Healer etc.
- Names are important – in Bible times they revealed something about the person. A man's name inherently communicates the integrity of that man.
- We should seek to have a good name - Proverbs 22.1; Ecclesiastes 7.1
- God reveals Himself to us through His Word – Even though His name is high and holy, God has magnified His Word above His own name.
- God's Word is the benchmark by which we test those who come in 'His name' (see Matthew 24.5, 1 John 4.1). All prophecies and other 'words' from God must be tested against the Written Word. Peter called the written word a more sure word of prophecy (2 Peter 1.16-21)

D. God's Word Has First Place

Proverbs 4.20-23

We must give the Word our full attention. It must be kept before our eyes and in our hearts. The people of God were told to keep hearing it, reading it, speaking it, wherever they went and whatever they did (Deuteronomy 6.6-9, 11.18-20).

- God's Word is true and should be desired more than gold, more than life itself (Psalm 19.7-9)
- Job treasured God's Word more than his natural food (Job 23.12)
- God's Word has been given to us so that we can live by them (Matthew 4.4)
- God's Word is solid foundation on which we can base our whole life (Matthew 7.24-25). We build by being obedient to it, being a doer of the word (James 1.22)
- We do not build our lives on the teachings of a church, the words of some preacher, the writings of some author, or the words of the latest song (songbook theology) – unless those areas are based on the Word.
- Disregard anything that does not line up or agree with God's Word – that includes the reports we receive through the world - media, doctors, professionals or even well-intentioned individuals. Believe God's report – His Word! (Numbers 13.30-33, Numbers 14.1-11; Isaiah 53.1; Psalm 1.1-2)

In order to believe for Greater Things in 2014 - Settle in your own heart that God's Word is greater – it must be our first resource rather than our last resort.

God said it : That settles it : I believe it (it is settled regardless of whether we believe it or not)

3. Following The Master's Example

So far we have already seen that

- God is greater than all
- God has magnified His Word above His name
- The Word must have first place in our lives.

In this lesson we are going to look at our next subject which is to do with obedience to God.

John 13.16

“I tell you the truth, a servant is not greater than his master. A messenger is not greater than the one who sent him” (John 13.16, NCV)

We ended our session last time by saying that we build our lives on the Word of God by giving it first place in our lives. We can only build by being obedient to the Word.

One of the Scriptures we finished with last lesson was James 1.22 “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves”

A builder can gather in millions of bricks and have them all at his disposal but they profit him nothing if he doesn't start laying them one on top of the other. We can take in all of the Word we can get but if we don't do anything with it we just get spiritually overweight

and unhealthy – we deceive ourselves.

**Faith cometh by hearing but needs accompanying action – Hebrews 4.2 (*the word profited them nothing, not being mixed with faith*) – faith is active not passive.

Listen to Jesus' words in Matthew 7.24-27 from Amplified Version

“So everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts upon them [obeying them] will be like a sensible (prudent, practical, wise) man who built his house upon the rock. And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them will be like a stupid (foolish) man who built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell--and great and complete was the fall of it”

The wise person builds his life by being obedient to the teachings of Jesus (the Word of God).

In our verse from John 13 we read “a servant is not greater than his master” - let us look at the context in which this statement was made.

- Jesus has just sat down with His disciples and eaten the Passover meal (vs2)
- He gets up from the table, picks up water and a towel and begins to wash the feet of His disciples. (vs4-5)
- When finished He says to them “Follow my example – I have shown you what to do, now it's your turn to do as I have done” (my paraphrase) (vs14-15)

A. The Master Shows The Way

Jesus said that He had given them an example. The word employed here is *hupodeigma*, and it means 'to teach by showing something; a figure; a pattern; a representation or type - to illustrate a thing'.

Jesus taught His disciples something by His action and told them to do what He had shown them. I believe a key verse to understanding this is found in verse 17 - “*If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.*”

He says that a servant is not greater than his master – what is good for the master is good for the servant. Note verse 14, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet”. A good leader will not ask somebody to do something they are not prepared to do themselves.

I don't necessarily believe He meant for us to physically wash one another's feet but rather that we follow His pattern in our living. He is showing us the way, how we should live for God – to do justly, love mercy, walk humbly (Micah 6.8)

- We are to live justly – do what is right, fair and proper
- love mercy – be merciful, loving and compassionate
- walk humbly – be humble before God (*that doesn't mean be a doormat for people to trample all over us – later study*)

Remember Jesus reprimanded Simon the Pharisee because he hadn't done what was right and expected of him (Luke 7.44-46).

B. If You Want To Become Great, Be A Servant

God expects us to be compassionate and serve one another in love – being humble

enough to serve.

Many people desire greatness, great ministries, great influence – become a servant, have a servant's heart – true greatness is in serving. Follow the example of Jesus.

Mark 10.42-45 (see also Matthew 20.20-28)

“But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.””

Matthew 10.24-25

“A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master...”

In a similar quotation to our text verse Jesus states that a

- disciple (student) is not greater than his teacher
- servant is not greater than his master

But He went on to say that it is enough that they become like them – the disciple like his teacher, the servant like his master. How is this achieved?

- by listening to what they say
- following the instructions they give
- following their example

It is enough for us to be like Jesus.

If you want to be great in the kingdom, or to see and do greater things then:

- listen to what God says
- don't be a hearer only, but be obedient to the Word of God
- follow the example of Jesus – who is greater than all.

Jesus Himself followed this same pattern - (John 8.28-29; John 12.49-50; John 15.15)

- He heard from the Father
- He said only what He heard His Father speak
- He did only what He His Father showed Him

4. Humility: The Prerequisite Of Greater Things

One of the passages of Scripture we finished with last lesson was Matthew 20.20-28 where James and John desired greatness, and a position of authority. They came to Him, with their mother, requesting to sit at Jesus right and left hand.

Jesus told them that greatness came at a cost – humility. If you want to be great learn to be a servant.

Like James & John many people desire greatness, great ministries, positions of authority

and status – they need to learn the secret of humility...

John 3.30

“He must become greater, and I must become less important” (NCV)

John the Baptist :

- a forerunner of Christ (Malachi 3.1)
- God's anointed prophet to prepare the way for Jesus (Isaiah 40.3; Matthew 3.3)
- filled with the Holy Spirit from within the womb (Luke 1.15)
- a Nazarite – separated, consecrated to God from birth (Luke 1.15; Numbers 6.1-12)
- a preacher of repentance (Matthew 3.1-2)
- baptised people in water upon confession of their sins, after repentance (Matthew 3.6,8)
- arrayed in a prophet's garments (Matthew 3.4; 2 Kings 1.8; Zechariah 13.4)
- had a relatively short ministry (most scholars agree about 6-12 months length) after which he was imprisoned by Herod (Luke 3.19-20)
- executed by Herod (Matthew 14.3-11)
- declared by the archangel Gabriel to be 'great in the sight of the Lord' (Luke 1.15)
- declared by Jesus to be the greatest of all the prophets. (Luke 7.28; Matthew 11.11 omits 'prophet')

John discovered a secret – He must increase, I must decrease

The least in the kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist (Luke 7.28, Matthew 11.11)

A. What Does It Mean To Be Humble?

Let's look at the Scripture to see what led John to make this statement about Jesus.

Matthew 3.13-17

(1) Jesus did not need to be baptised by John as John's baptism was a baptism of repentance.

(2) John tries to prevent Jesus from being baptised.

He “protested strenuously” (Amp) – other translations say “He objected” (CEV); “He forbade Him” (AV); “He tried to make Him change His mind” (TEV)

We can gather from John's statement: “I need to be baptised by You, and are You coming to me” that his reasoning is - “I'm not worthy to do this”.

This thought is an overflow of what is in his heart – he testified himself that “I am not worthy to even carry His shoes” (see verse 11).

(3) “Permit it to be so now” - Take a step down, humble yourself and submit to this request without any objections.

“for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” - it is the right and proper way to fulfill righteousness.

Take a close look at this verse and two words in particular - “for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” - IT & US

Us – Jesus & John

“..for this is the fitting way for [both of] us to fulfill all righteousness [that is, to perform completely whatever is right]...” (Amp)

Jesus was saying to John that this was necessary for them both to fulfil righteousness, their duty to God.

- “this is how we should fulfil all our duty to God” (Moffatt)
- “for this is the fitting way for both of us to do our full duty to God” (Williams)
- “for it is right for us to do everything that God requires” (Goodspeed)

It – what is that duty? What is it that we must do to fulfil our duty to God?

- “we do well to conform in this way with all that God requires” (NEB)
- “It is right for us to meet meet all the Law's demands” - (JB Philips)

I suggest that Jesus is talking about submitting to God (rather than baptism) so that we fulfil righteousness.

Jesus had to submit to God and be baptised, even though He did not need baptism of repentance.

John had to submit to Jesus and baptise Him, when it really should have been the other way round.

Romans 12.1

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”

Our reasonable service (duty) is to present ourselves as a living sacrifice – a life surrendered and submitted to God.

(4) John humbled himself and submitted to Jesus and baptised Him

As Jesus came up out of the water, John saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove and coming upon Him and heard the voice of the Father speaking.

Greater things were taking place - he had seen with his eyes what God had revealed to him some time earlier.

John 1. 29-37

In this passage John testifies (v33) that God had shown Him that the One on whom he saw the Holy Spirit descending was the One.

God elevated him and his ministry. From then on he began to point men and women to Jesus. “He must increase, I must decrease” (John 3.30). John had learnt the lesson to be submitted to God

Whoever or whatever we submit to becomes greater in our lives. We give pre-eminence to what we submit to.

Humility (or to be humble) is to submit yourself to someone higher or greater, submission, make low.

James 4.6-7

“God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble”

- To be humble is also not making ourselves to feel so unworthy, or so poor, so debased – this is not humility, this is a type of pride, an inverted-pride and God

- resists that.
- To be humble is to submit yourself to God and what He says about you.

Philippians 2.8-9

Jesus humbled Himself. He submitted to His Father

- He only did and said what He heard from His Father – that's humility
- He was obedient to His Father's will – even in the garden of Gethsemane as He was facing the cross, He prayed and surrendered to His Father's will.
- Because he humbled Himself, God has highly exalted Him

1 Peter 5.6

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time”

James 4.10

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up”

Those who humble themselves are exalted – they are elevated to greater things

5. Believers Will See And Do Greater Things

In this lesson we are going to examine the words of Jesus to us who believe, regarding greater things – that is the things Jesus said we would see and do.

A. Believers Will See Greater Things

John 1.50

“Jesus said to Nathanael, 'Do you believe simply because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than that'” (NCV)

In this passage (verses 43-51) we read that first Jesus found Philip, then Philip found Nathanael – reaching out to others, fulfilling the commission to evangelise.

1. Can anything good come out of Nazareth?

- Some have suggested that Nazareth had a reputation – place of outcasts; slums; held in contempt
- It was at Nazareth where Jesus was rejected and they tried to throw Him off the mountain/hill (Luke 4.29-30)
- Jesus was unable to do any mighty miracles in Nazareth (Mark 6.1-6)
 - who does He think He is – 'just the carpenter'
 - they took offense at Him
 - Jesus marvelled at their unbelief – God isn't moved by need, He's moved by faith

Jesus sees Nathanael approaching and remarks that he is an honest man, in whom is no

guile or deceit or falsehood nor duplicity.

Nathanael wants to know how Jesus knew him seeing they had never met.

Jesus then says something that amazes him – 'before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you'

- something significant that went straight to the heart of the matter for Nathanael
- what was he doing sitting under the fig tree – thought processes: plans or frustrations, discouragement
- To this statement Nathanael responds favourably and in faith – You are the Son of God.

Nathanael is only mentioned twice in the whole Bible – 5 times in this passage, and again in John 21.2

Scholars believe he could be Bartholomew mentioned by the other gospel writers – (Bartholomew is not mentioned in John).

2. You will see greater things

Jesus told Nathanael (and the other disciples – you is plural in vs 51) that they would see something greater than what had just been manifest to him.

They would see the angels of God ascending/descending on the Son of Man - “..you will all see heaven open and angels of God going up and coming down on the Son of Man” (NCV)

I believe Jesus is saying here that because they had put their faith in Him that they would see greater manifestations of the power of God at work – they would see miracles, receive revelation and experience God to a greater extent than any of the prophets who were before.

Three days later Jesus began His miraculous ministry at the wedding feast in Cana, the home town of Nathanael (John 21.2). This miraculous event sealed their belief in Jesus as He manifested His glory (John 2.11) as a confirmation of His words a few days earlier.

At a much later stage in His ministry, Jesus reminded Martha of Bethany - “... Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God” (John 11.40)

What is understood to be 'the glory of God' ?

- Glory - (Heb. *kabod*, *tip'eret* ; Gk. *doxa* - meaning heavy, weighty, honour, splendour, brightness, pre-eminence, majesty). When we speak of 'the Glory' it is the full weight of God Himself and His power manifested in tangible form eg a cloud in 2 Chronicles 5.14 & Mark 9.7
- Moses asked to see the glory of God (Exodus 33.18)
- God shows him His glory – He makes all His goodness pass before him (Exodus 33.19; Exodus 34.5-7)

Believers will see God's glory – the greater things that Jesus spoke of to Nathanael - the opened heavens and God's goodness being poured out. Peter testified to this in Acts 10.38

“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, who went about doing

good, healing all who were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did....”

Peter said to Cornelius – we saw the greater things that Jesus did: His acts of goodness, healing the sick and setting people free from the oppression of the devil.

B. Believers Will Do Greater Things

But what about us born-again believers. Jesus didn't say that we would just see the mighty works of God but that we would do them as we allowed God, by His Spirit, to work through us.

John 14.12

“I tell you the truth, whoever believes in Me will do the same things that I do. Those who believe will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father” (NCV)

In fact Jesus didn't just say that we would do the works that He did. It says in this verse that we will do greater things than He did.

***I don't agree with the school of thought that say greater things will be done because there are more of us doing the works over a longer period of time. I believe it is greater in nature not number.*

** The woman was healed by touching the hem of Jesus' garment – cloth was taken from Paul and brought healing to the sick some distance away (Acts 19.11-12), Peter's shadow passing over the sick healed others (Acts 5.15-16)

Just think of some the great miracles that Jesus performed through His earthly ministry. He says that we will do greater things than He did, not in our own power or might, but by the Spirit of God that is in us. (Zechariah 4.6)

Jesus going to the Father meant that He would send the Holy Spirit, the *Paraklete* – (Helper, Comforter, Counsellor, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, Standby)

Jesus promised that after the Holy Spirit had come we would be filled with power* to fulfill the great commission given to us to go into all the world (Mark 16.15-18; Matthew 28.18-20)

**dunamis* – power, force, strength, might, ability and efficiency; explosive power (*hence the word dynamite*) ; - miraculous power, power to perform miracles

Jesus said in Mark that signs (greater things) would follow those who believe.

In My name... cast out demons, speak with new tongues, take up serpents and deadly things and come to no harm, lay hands on the sick and see them recover.

When Jesus said that believers would do greater things than He did, He followed that statement up with this:

“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” (John 14.13-14)

“I tell you the truth, whoever believes in me will do the same things that I do. Those who

believe will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And if you ask for anything in My name, I will do it for you so that the Father's glory will be shown through the Son. If you ask Me for anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14.12-14, NCV)

6. Greater Things Attest the Claims/Words of Jesus

We have already seen in these lessons that

- God is greater than all
- The Word must have first place in our lives – God has magnified His Word above His name
- We should follow the Master's example
- Humility is the prerequisite of greater things
- Believers will see greater things as God's glory is manifest to them
- Believers will do greater things as witnesses for Him

Last time we looked at Nathanael and how Jesus said to him that he would see greater things, then we went on and saw that Jesus' began His miraculous ministry at the wedding feast in Cana, the home town of Nathanael (John 21.2). This miraculous event sealed the disciple's belief in Jesus as He manifested His glory (John 2.11).

Tonight, following on from that, we are going to examine how the greater things Jesus said we would see and do attest (*to validate, certify, provide evidence for*) the claims and words of Jesus, about who He is.

John 5.20, 36

"The Father loves the Son and shows the Son all the things He Himself does. But the Father will show the Son even greater things than this so that you can all be amazed.... But I have a proof about Myself that is greater than that of John. The things I do, which are the things My Father gave Me to do, prove that the Father sent Me" (NCV)

This whole passage (John 5.15-47) is talking about the authority and authenticity of Jesus' testimony – that He is who He claimed to be. This is in response to the Jews outrage that Jesus healed the man at the pool on the Sabbath.

Jesus makes several points here:

- The Father and the Son are one (vs 17-18) – John 10.30
- He only did what He saw the Father do (vs 19) – the Father showed Him what to do and told Him what to say.
- The Father would show Him greater works so that people would believe in Him (vs 20).
John Gill (18th century theologian & Bible expositor) states "*these greater works shown to, and done by Christ.. were to prove his divine sonship, his proper deity, his true Messiahship, to confirm the faith of his followers in him, and for the glory of God*".
- To honour the Father, you must honour the Son (vs 23).
- All who hear what Jesus says and believes in Him will have everlasting life (vs 24).
- Jesus is the Life-Giver (vs 25-26)

- The Father has given authority (Gk. *exousia* - right, power of jurisdiction) to Jesus (vs 27).
- His judgements are righteous and just because He judges in accordance with the will of the Father (vs 30).
- He was unable to bear witness of Himself (vs 31).
 - The words '*not true*' here have nothing to do with being false but rather unbalanced, they imply that self evidence was not permissible or admitted as valid in law (see Amplified translation). Every testimony had to be authenticated in the mouth of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19.15; Matthew 18.16; John 8.13-18).
 - Although they appear to be contradictory, do not confuse what Jesus said here with **John 8.14** [*compare the two verses*] where He states that His witness is true - this latter verse is a statement of personal competency to speak about Himself.
- Jesus then introduces four other witnesses to substantiate His testimony.
 - a) second witness – John the Baptist (vs 33).
 - b) third witness, greater than John – the works that Jesus did, shown Him by the Father (vs 36). **this is what we are looking at in this lesson**
 - c) fourth witness – the Father Himself (vs 37).
 - d) fifth witness – the Scriptures, Moses, the prophets (vs 39).

There are an additional two witnesses (not mentioned in this chapter) they are:

- e) The Holy Spirit (John 15.26) who had not yet been poured out on the church
- f) The disciples (John 15.27) who would be His witnesses after the Holy Spirit had come upon them - Acts 1.8

Jesus did many works which elicited from the people a belief in Him.

John 2.11	John 4.50-53	John 10.41-42
John 2.23	John 7.31	John 11.45
John 4.39-41	John 8.30	John 12.9-11

John 14.11

We looked at this verse last time but I want to re-read it because of what it says:

“Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. Or believe because of the miracles I have done.” (NCV)

“Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me; or else believe Me for the sake of the [very] works themselves. [*If you cannot trust Me, at least let these works that I do in My Father's name convince you.*]” (Amplified)

The greater works testify to the Sonship and Lordship of Jesus

Mark 16.15-20

a) Mark 16.15-16

Jesus left us, the church, with the awesome responsibility of going and preaching the good news of the gospel to all creation.

How do we convince them that Jesus is the Lord and Saviour? We don't !

Our responsibility is to tell them; the Holy Spirit will convince them (John 16.8-11 NCV)

b) Mark 16.17-18

The greater works, the signs that accompany believers as they preach the gospel, attest to the Lordship of Jesus.

These signs will follow those who believe – in My name (believe in His name and use His name)

- Cast out demons
- speak in new tongues
- pick up deadly snakes or drink any deadly poison and not be harmed
- lay hands on sick and see them recover

The NCV says that these things will be done as proof.

c) Mark 16.20

“And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with [*them*] and confirming the word through the accompanying signs”

The believers did what Jesus had asked them – they went everywhere preaching the good news.

In Jesus name they wrought greater miracles – God attesting (confirming, proving) the Word (Jesus) through the signs.

“The followers went everywhere in the world and told the Good News to people, and the Lord helped them. The Lord proved that the Good News they told was true by giving them power to work miracles.” (NCV)

“And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord kept working with them and confirming the message by the attesting signs and miracles that closely accompanied [*it*].” (Amplified)

Exodus 4.1-9

How do we convince them? - we asked this question a few minutes ago

- God was sending Moses into Egypt to confront Pharoah and the Israelites
- Moses asks 'what if they don't believe me'
- God tells him to perform certain signs

“that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.” (vs 5)

Signs are given that men may believe in God and turn to Him.

John writes: “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these (*the signs that have been recorded*) are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20.31)

- The world needs to be evangelised so that Jesus can return for His church.
- We need to see and do the greater works today in our evangelism - these greater works will help usher in the return of Jesus (see Matthew 24.14)

“And this Good News of the Kingdom shall be proclaimed throughout the whole world to set the evidence before all the Gentiles; and then the End will come” (Weymouth)

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