

Several Promises Including the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

John 14:12-24

John 14:12-24 - *“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. ¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. ¹⁵ “If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.*

¹⁹ “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”

²³ Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴ He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.”

Background Notes

John 14 is part of the Upper Room Discourses. The discourses began in John 13, after the foot washing and the Last Supper, and they continue on to John 17. These teachings were given only to the disciples, not to the general public.

The Lord made several promises in John 14. In verses 2-3, the Lord promised that He would personally return for His own followers (v2-3). What a great promise!

In verses 12-24 there are further promises for the believer, including the promise of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In verse 18 the Lord said, *“I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”* Was the Lord referring here to His resurrection, or to the coming of the Holy Spirit?

In view of verses 19-20, I think we could say that the Lord had both events in mind. *“A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also”* (v19). In verse 19 the Lord was referring to His resurrection. Notice that His resurrection is a pledge of our own resurrection.

“At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” In verse 20 the Lord referred to the day when He would ascend to the Father’s right hand, and the Holy Spirit would be sent to believers. *“It is the Holy Spirit that assures us of these great truths, and you will know that I am in my Father and you in Me, and I in you.”* So it seems that the Lord had both His resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit in mind when He said, *“I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you”* (v18).

One more background note: the “Judas” mentioned in verse 22 is probably the same disciple called “Lebbaeus” or “Thaddaeus” in Matthew 10 and Mark 3.

Doctrinal / Teaching Points

1. Every Christian is guaranteed great ministry and effective prayer.

First, let’s discuss the promise of “great ministry.” Verse 12 says, “... *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.*” What did the Lord mean by this statement?

The Lord’s main idea seems to be works or ministry that is “greater in **extent**.” He wasn’t saying that because He fed 5000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish, we should expect to feed thousands of people with 3 loaves and 1 fish! And He didn’t mean that because He raised Lazarus from the dead, we should expect to do the same. No. The Lord was speaking primarily about the **great effects** of Christian ministries. We are to follow His ministry, and the effects will be multiplied.

The Lord was speaking directly to His disciples, and they certainly **did** perform literal miracles after the coming of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 5, when the shadow of Peter passed over those who were sick, they were healed. And in Acts 19, cloths brought from the body of Paul brought healing to many. But when the Lord said “...*he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do...*”-- by “he” the Lord meant **any** Christian, not just the disciples.

The “greater works” are not necessarily physical miracles, but the work of spreading the gospel around the world under the power of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, three thousand people came to Christ through Peter’s preaching – more than in all the three years of our Lord’s earthly ministry! In one TV broadcast, Billy Graham preached to more people than the Lord did in His entire earthly ministry.

So verse 12 applies to you and me as well. We can be involved in ministries that reach thousands of people - not just in Israel where the Lord’s ministry was confined, but also around the world! What a promise! Greater works - greater in extent! Every Christian is guaranteed great ministry - but we have to get involved! Getting involved is a prerequisite for greater ministry!

What about the promise of “effective prayer” in verses 13-14? “*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.*” That’s a great promise!

So suppose I pray, “Lord, I pray that You will make me the wealthiest person in the Chicago area!” Will the Lord answer that prayer? Probably not! What if I ask, “Lord, make me the wealthiest person in Chicago so that I can give 90% back to you?” Will the Lord answer that prayer? Probably not! What if we tack on “in Jesus name” - as the formulaic ending to our prayers? No! Verse 14 was **not** given as a **formula**! When we ask something “in the name of Jesus,” it means we are asking for things that are **in accordance with His will**! The Lord is glorified **only** when we ask in accordance with

His will (v13). So since I'm certainly not wealthy, I guess God will be more glorified if I'm **not** the wealthiest Christian in the Chicago area!

Some of you might be thinking, "That guarantee in verse 13-14 is not much of a promise!" On the contrary! It's a **great promise!** Suppose I pray, "Lord, help me to love my wife more." Or suppose we pray, "Lord, help us to have a more Christ-centered home," or, "Lord, help us to share Christ with our non-Christian friends." God will **certainly** answer **these** prayers **because they're in accordance with His will!** Every Christian is guaranteed great ministry and effective prayer.

2. Every Christian is guaranteed great comfort and effective counsel.

In verses 16-17 the Lord made the great promise that the Holy Spirit would indwell every true believer. *"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."*

Notice that the Lord referred to the Holy Spirit as "**He**" - not "**It**." The Holy Spirit is not an influence; He is a **Person** — the third Person of the Trinity.

The word "helper" or "comforter" in verse 16 comes from the Greek word *parakletos*, and it means "one who comes along side to help in time of need." That help may be advice, or it may be teaching. It may be encouragement, or it may be exhortation. It may be comfort, or it may be strength. It may be even be defense.

The same word is used in first 1 John 2:1, where the word *parakletos* is translated "advocate." An advocate is someone who speaks up for us and defends us, like a defense counsel in a court of law. The Lord Jesus is described as our Advocate in 1 John 2:1: "... *these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*"

All these things are involved in the Greek word *parakletos*. Whatever we need, the Holy Spirit is the One who comes alongside us to help in time of need. And this blessing is guaranteed for **every** Christian! Every Christian is guaranteed great comfort and effective counsel. What a great promise!

Notice that the guarantee of the Holy Spirit is only for the Christian, not for the world (v17). Believers are different. We have an advantage, an unseen advantage. We have **God!** Talk about confidence for the future!

"...the Spirit of truth.... He dwells with you and will be in you." Remember - the Lord spoke these words to His disciples before the cross and before Pentecost. He used the future tense, because He and the disciples were still living in "Old Testament times" – before the cross.

The Holy Spirit was present in Old Testament times, but He did not **indwell** the believer. In Old Testament days, the Spirit "came upon" various individuals at different times for different purposes. But after the Lord Jesus returned to Heaven, the Holy Spirit would come and be "indwell" every believer. 1 Corinthians 6:19: *"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?"*

And notice that verse 16 says “**forever**” - “*that He may abide with you forever.*” What a reassuring promise! Are you discouraged? Do you need assurance? Do you need help of any kind? Do you need comfort, or counsel? Because of the Holy Spirit, every Christian is guaranteed great comfort and effective counsel.

Practical Application

We can experience Heaven on earth!

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me’” (v22-23).

What more could we ask for from God? For the Lord Jesus to love us and reveal Himself to us (v21), and for the Father and the Son to make their home with us (v23) – why, this is a taste of Heaven on earth! In fact, the word “*abode*” in verse 23 is the same word that is used for the “mansions” of My Father’s house that Jesus mentioned in verse 2! So you can experience Heaven on earth! Now it is true, earth is not Heaven, but we can begin to experience what Heaven will be like, even while we are here on this earth.

I’m sure some of you are saying at this point, “Dave, I believe that - but what’s the secret to enjoying that taste of “Heaven on earth”?” The secret is given right here. The secret is **obedience**! Notice that **obedience** is the prerequisite that in verses 21 and 23: “*He who has My commandments and **keeps** them, it is he who loves Me.... If a man love me, he will **keep** my words...*” [emphasis added].

Notice the difference, by the way. To **keep My commandments** means to keep the black and white commands of Scripture, to keep His Word. That is the will of God, the will that He desires. “*Flee youthful lusts*” - that is a **command!** “*Love one another as I have loved you*” – that is a **command!** Remembering the Lord through participating in the Lord’s Supper is a **command**: “*Do this in remembrance of Me.*”

Obedience to His Word is the secret for coming to know what a taste of Heaven on earth is all about. You can experience it - if you are obedient. “*If you love me, keep my commandments*” (v15). **Obedience will not be difficult if we really love the Lord!**

If we love the Lord, and if we keep His commandments and His Word, we can experience a taste of Heaven on earth!