

## **John 14:12--14 – “Prayer is the Work”**

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**Intro:** What is the work that God’s people are called to participate in? Jesus wanted to make the answer to that question perfectly plain to His disciples before He went back to His Father. In the verses before us tonight, He returned to the theme which He had begun in chapter 13, having answered the questions of Thomas and Philip concerning where He was going, and how one can see the Father. What was the message He was anxious to draw their attention to? It is simply that...

**Proposition:** Christ is at work today through God’s praying children; we should glorify God by joining Christ in His work.

Three movements: (v.12) The Works Christ Does; (v.13) The Glory Christ Shares; (v.14) The Authority Christ Delegates.

(v.12) The Works Christ Does – Here is the union of Christ and His believers. Because of our union with Him, we now do the works He does, and even greater works than He did during His first coming. **John 14:12 - 12** *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. It certainly sounds strange to our ears when Jesus said that those who believe in Him would do even greater works than He did, and it must have sounded even stranger to His disciples, but within a few days they would know it to be true in experience. The Day of Pentecost alone saw more people added to the Church than all those who believed over the course of Jesus’ entire three and a half years of earthly ministry. How could this be? Because, He said, “I am going to the Father” and the Spirit of God would be poured out on the Church. The Bible tells us that when Jesus ascended to the Father, He asked the Father to pour out the Spirit on all who put their faith in Him, and the Father answered by doing exactly that. The Holy Spirit has been poured out on the Church by the Father, at the request of the Son (John 14:16-17). The result of this has been tremendous. Because of this outpouring of the Spirit, believers are now in living union with Jesus Christ, God’s Son (John 14:20). **John 14:20 - 20** *In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.* The implications of this living union are astounding, and the chief implication pointed to in this passage is the fact that Christ now works through His Church – each believer has now become a member of His body – and that means that Christ is now continuing His work on earth through each one who believes. Therefore, when you and I do anything of value it is what Paul spoke of in Colossians 1:27 – *“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”* There is a oneness between Christ and His followers. As the Trinity is one in power, purpose and plans, so now Christ and His people are one in power, purpose and plan. His power; His purpose; His plan, working in each Spirit empowered believer.*

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[DOCTRINAL POINT] All who believe are now one with Christ in His work.

[ILLUSTRATION] Whenever you start a new job, you expect to receive training for the work you are being asked to perform, and part of any training worth its salt is the communication of the job’s purpose. What are you trying to achieve through your labor? This is important because we all want to know that what we are doing has some significance, some worthwhile goal in view. Without a purpose, work become meaningless drudgery. In this same way, believers must realize that we have been saved for a purpose; that God has a plan for us once we’ve come into His family. Without this realization, our continued presence on earth seems meaningless. Why not just take us immediately to heaven, if our personal salvation was all God had in mind? Many believers in our day do not seem to realize that God has saved us for a definite purpose beyond simply giving us eternal life.

[APPLICATION] Anyone who thinks that he has no purpose beyond his own salvation needs to hear that he is appointed as a co-laborer with Christ in His work today. We’ll examine more closely the nature of this work later, but for the moment we’ll simply specify that Christ is intent on gathering the scattered children of God on planet earth and bringing them all home to His Father’s house. Christ’s statement in this verse leaves no doubt in the matter: *“Whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do.”* There is no sense of uncertainty in Christ’s mind, for He said, *“Whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do.”* Not, “might do,” but “will do.” Each believer is called to this important responsibility and participates in Christ’s work in one way or another. Some have a gift for witnessing; others help with hands on ministries; all are called to pray. There are no believers who do not share equally in this calling. What is your part? How are you fulfilling your calling?

(v.13) The Glory Christ Shares – Why does Jesus work through His Church? What is the purpose? The purpose is for one reason only: That God may be glorified through His Son. **John 14:13 - 13** *Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* Notice carefully the last half of the verse: *“That the Father may be glorified in His Son.”* Glorifying God was the purpose Christ came to fulfill. The importance of the Glory of God is not to be despised or overlooked. It is of the highest importance. The whole creation exists for this one reason: God has chosen to make Himself known in all His glory to men and angels through the saving work of Christ. Jesus’ overriding motive for all He did was this one purpose. His purpose was not to save us; it was to save us for God’s glory, a glory shared by both the Father and the Son. Sometimes we ask the question, “What was Jesus thinking of on the cross?” The most likely answer is not, “He was thinking of you and me.” More likely the proper answer is, “He was thinking of glorifying His Father.” This is not to deny God’s love for His people. God’s love for His people is God’s glory. The Father and the Son share the glory of the cross. In fact,

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all three members of the Trinity were fully involved in our salvation: the Father willed it; the Son accomplished it; the Spirit applies it. Here is the glory of God: He has done everything for His most unworthy flock.

[DOCTRINAL POINT] God’s glory is the surpassing motive for the work Jesus calls us to do.

[ILLUSTRATION] Have you ever watched a movie or read a book and walked away after all was said and done wondering, “My goodness! I wonder what that was all about!” Frustrating isn’t it? In order to benefit from the story, we must see the point of telling the story.

[APPLICATION] Do we realize, are we gripped by the truth that the whole story we are living is about God’s glory? Just as Jesus lived His life for God’s glory, so each believer is called to live a life for God’s glory alone. If we have not seen this, it is likely that our God is too small.<sup>1</sup> We are scarcely ready to play our part in this drama until we have realized the glorious greatness of our God. “*He who is forgiven little, love little,*” said Jesus on one occasion. The one who has realized the greatness of the gift received through God’s grace and Christ’s sacrifice longs for God’s greatness to be seen by others. Once we understand, once we really see it, glorifying God becomes an all-consuming passion. Have you realized this? If not perhaps you would appreciate the following prayer by A. W. Tozer:

O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need of further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, the Triune God, I want to want Thee; I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be made more thirsty still. Show me Thy glory, I pray Thee, that so I may know Thee indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul, “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.” Then give me grace to rise and follow Thee up from this misty lowland where I have wandered for so long. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.<sup>2</sup>

(v.14) The Authority Christ Delegates – To ask in His name is to ask in His authority. **John 14:14 - 14** *If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.* As believers, we are authorized to use the name of Jesus as the basis of our prayers. We have authority to do this. The principle of authority is well known. Those who do anything under authority are merely administrators of someone else’s goods. They must conform to the will and wishes of the one who has charged them with their duties and are not authorized to go beyond or contrary to the will of their master. In this verse, Jesus delegates to each believer the authority to ask for things in His name. This does not mean that we have *carte blanche* authorization to satisfy our own wishes

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<sup>1</sup> J. B. Phillips

<sup>2</sup> Tozer, A. W., “The Best of A. W. Tozer” (1978). USA. Baker Book House Company.

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through prayer. We do not have that authority. We may ask only for those things which are according to His will. Further, don't miss the important point that we must ask. God has ordained certain things that He will only do in answer to believing prayer. What things? “*The works that I do,*” said Jesus in verse 12. What is the work that He does? Glorifying God by gathering into the Church “*the scattered children of God*” (John 11:52). The whole tenor of these verses has to do with our joining Jesus in His work of glorifying God by gathering into God's house all whom God has foreknown as His children – some from every nation, tongue, tribe, and people. Here then is the work we are authorized to ask Him to do through us when we pray. This is the hub around which our prayers revolve. Do we ask Him to feed the hungry? Yes, so that God may be glorified and souls attracted to Him. Do we pray for some to be healed? Yes, so that God's glory will be seen and His people will be gathered. Do we pray for Him to comfort? Yes, so that His love for the hurting will be displayed. True prayer revolves around His glory displayed as a witness for all the world to see.

[DOCTRINAL POINT] Christ does His work through His people who pray.

[ILLUSTRATION] If you go car shopping these days, and you haven't been for a while, you will probably be amazed at the accessories being offered on new vehicles. I suppose back up cameras are old hat by now, but what about chargers for your cell phone? Or internet access through your vehicle. And increasingly, self-driving features are being added to newer models. What's next? And do we really need these things anyway? Accessories are just – well, accessories! Something added; something thrown in to make the vehicle a little more enticing to the buyer. I wonder if many Christians in our day don't see prayer as an accessory to their Christian lives.

[APPLICATION] Christians who think of prayer as a mere “accessory” in their lives need to realize that far from being an “add-on,” a deluxe addition to the standard model, prayer is the work. Prayer is fundamental since God has ordained Christ to do His work in answer to believing prayer. You can witness without praying, but little will be achieved. You can give without praying, but few will be blessed. You can sing praise songs at the top of your lungs, but without prayer worship cannot become empowered. We will attain little in the work and dimly glorify the Master until we learn the secret: Prayer is the work!

**Conclusion:** What is the work that God's people are called to participate in? Jesus made it plain, didn't He? We are called into living union with Him so that we can, like Him, glorify our Father in heaven. And He has given us the authority to ask for the fulfillment of that work in answer to believing prayer. The things Christ has taught us tonight call each one of us to consider our part in His work. Do we see the great purpose? Are we utilizing the great

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authority with which we've been entrusted? Are we joining the Master in His work? I trust that each one of us will hear His call to action and respond.