

# 'Ministry of Jesus to Troubled disciples.' Ch. 14 (Keswick Convention 1973)

by Eric J. Alexander

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*Eric J. Alexander's sermon explores Jesus' compassionate ministry to His troubled disciples, offering them comfort and assurance in their time of need.*

**Duration:** 1:00:28

**Scripture:** John 13:1, John 14:12-20, John 14:25-29, John 15:6

**Topics:** "Disciples"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of resting on the wisdom, word, and work of God. He highlights that our faith and confidence should be specific and grounded in Jesus. The sermon focuses on the last words of Jesus in the Book of the Passion, chapters 13 to 21, which hold special significance as they were spoken on the night before his crucifixion. The preacher also discusses the importance of obedience as evidence of love and the role of the Holy Spirit in enabling believers to live a life of consistent obedience.

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## Transcript

To go back to the Word of God for yourself and to get down to some serious study of these wonderful words of our Lord. Bishop Ryle is right, of course, when he speaks of the profound depths of John's Gospel. But Dr. Leon Morris, who has recently written on John's Gospel, is also right when he points out that there is a combination in the Gospel of John of great profundity and great simplicity.

There are riches here, in other words, for the mature Christian, and there is enough here to stretch the largest mind. But I want to encourage young Christian here this morning by saying to you that there is an abundance here for the newest believer, from the hand of the Lord whose delight it is to make wise the simple. And I pray that whatever our spiritual stage may be, we may come and find that God has something precisely for our need and our stage, from these glorious chapters.

Now the Gospel of John devotes almost half of its chapters, 13 to 21, to the last week in the earthly life of Jesus. Indeed many people divide the Gospel into two books, the book of the signs, chapters 1 to 12, and the book of the passion, chapters 13 to 21. And it is a remarkable thing that half of the Gospel almost is devoted to this last week in Jesus' life.

What we have in John chapter 14 to 17 are the last words that Jesus spoke on the very last night of his life. And while from the cross he spoke a few final sentences, these chapters represent the last sustained period of teaching, all given within 24 hours of the time when he was to hang upon the cross at Calvary. And the fact that almost one-fifth of the Gospel of John is devoted to these last words of Jesus in the last hours of his earthly life invests them with a very special significance.

We are being permitted here to listen to our Lord's most intimate words to his disciples, spoken under the very shadow of the cross, and above all to hear or overhear him open his heart to his Father in the great high priestly prayer. It's not surprising, therefore, that so very often these chapters in John have been described by Christian people as the holy of holies of the New Testament, the inner sanctuary of the Bible. And it is obvious to anybody who comes to read these chapters with a believing heart that there is something that comes into your spirit as you come here.

You're very conscious that you're treading on holy ground, and there is a sense in which when one begins to expound them, one almost has the feeling of treading with clumsy feet over this kind of territory. The occasion which provides the context of these chapters is, of course, the impending departure of Jesus from the world, and particularly from his disciples, by means of the suffering and sin-bearing of the cross. And that prospect, the prospect of Jesus departing from them, the prospect that he has been opening up to them, that his departure from them is to be associated with his suffering and shame and agony, that he is to be the object of ridicule and mockery and spitting by the Jews, is something that's so different from everything the disciples had expected and planned, that their hearts are filled with a great sense of heaviness and foreboding and sorrow.

I wonder if we can grasp just how shattering an experience this must have been, and what kind of men these were whom Jesus is originally addressing here in these chapters. These men who, as they said, had left everything to follow him, who had staked everything upon Jesus, are now discovering that he is going to leave them. And the whole world seems to be collapsing around them in the context of these chapters, and they are filled with sorrow.

Now the teaching of John chapters 14 to 16, and the intercession of chapter 17, are really the caring ministry of Jesus for such weak, fearful, and discouraged disciples. That is the whole content of these chapters of John's gospel. It is as though the Lord were standing above the storm, which is about to break on all its fullness upon the disciples.

And he is saying to them, let not your heart be troubled. Let not your heart be troubled. Now this trouble of heart of which Jesus speaks in chapter 14 verse 1, is neither an uncommon nor an unworthy thing in the experience of the believer.

Bishop Ryle says, even the best of Christians have many bitter cups to drink between grace and glory. And that's very true. This trouble of heart is neither an uncommon nor an unworthy thing.

Indeed, our Lord himself uses this very same word in chapter 12 of John verse 27, about his own feeling and his own heart condition. Now is my soul troubled, he says. And what should I say? Father save me from this hour, but for this cause I came unto this hour.

But he says, my soul is troubled. And the Lord Jesus knew what it was, to have a troubled heart. And indeed, if you look a little more closely at these chapters, you will see that the troubles of the disciples really derive from the three classical sources of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The three areas from which we ourselves discover some of these pressures, some of these troubles pouring in upon our lives as believers. An inevitable part of our spiritual experience. And the disciples found that it came, of course, from this special situation, when the Lord was going to leave them, when the world was collapsing round about them.

But if you analyze it, the trouble came from these three great classical sources. Look at chapter 15 verse 18, and you will see the beginning of the account of the trouble that they are going to experience from a hostile world. If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Now what is going to be one source of their agony, their trouble? It's going to be the world.

A world which is hostile to God. A world which is implacably opposed to the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have read through chapter 14, which I hope you have on the instructions of the chairman, you will have noticed that in these first 11 verses, and indeed further back from verse 36 of chapter 13, there is an abundant illustration of the weakness and limitations of the flesh from which their troubles were deriving to.

That is the very fact that they were men. That they were saints and not angels. That they were still in the world and still in the flesh.

Because when a man is brought to the Lord, he is no more taken out of the flesh than he is taken out of the world. And we discover the pressures and the tensions that derive from being in the flesh. Now these men are full of the kind of questionings that derive from these limitations in their understanding and in their ability.

They are asking questions of Jesus. Lord, they say, where are you going? Peter says, Lord, why cannot I follow you? They say, Lord, when will you reveal yourself? Lord, how can we know the way? It's all this sense of questioning that derives from the weakness and limitations of the flesh. Lord, why? Lord, where? Lord, how can we? Now we know this kind of thing ourselves, don't we? It's this that our Lord Jesus put his finger on in the garden of Gethsemane, do you remember? When he is looking into the hearts of these men.

And what is it that he says? He says, the spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak. And it's the weakness of the flesh that is one source of their troubled hearts. But in chapter 14 verse 30, you notice that we are introduced for the first time in these chapters to the ultimate source of their trouble.

And that is the personal malevolence of the evil one. The ruler of this world cometh, says Jesus in 14:30. And he has no power over me.

But he recognizes the fact that one of the fundamental factors in this situation to which he is addressing himself, the troubled heart of the believer, is that there is a personal foe. There is an enemy of the souls of men. And he is coming under great conflict, both for the disciples and for Jesus, is with the evil one.

And in chapter 17 verse 15, our Lord specifically prays about this dimension in their trouble, you remember? Keep them from the evil one. Now beloved, I think perhaps many of us don't think enough about this. I know that it's possible to be more Satan conscious than God conscious, and that's a very bad thing.

You've got to be more God conscious than Satan conscious. But there are some of us who have not obeyed the apostolic injunction. That we should beware of the devil as a roaring lion.

Behind the disciples troubled hearts is the subtle attack of the evil one, seeking to dismay them, to discourage them, to engender distrust in the Lord Jesus Christ. And whenever you find that happening in your experience, when that's one of the elements in your trouble, then behind it all lies the personal malevolence of the devil, who is out to discourage you, to dislodge your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, to bring circumstances with all their clouds, to be the great issue that you're seeing. And Jesus warns the disciples about it and against it.

Now we live our Christian lives, beloved, in the midst of the same foes. And there are, I have little doubt, many people here at Keswick this week. May I say especially I am sure there are many servants of God here this week, who know what it is to be living in the midst of these kind of pressures, who know what it is to have this kind of trouble of heart in a different context.

And Jesus' teaching has a timeless relevance for us as we seek renewal here at Keswick. May the Lord come just as he came to these disciples, and make this place to be an upper room for us in these days, and open his heart to us, and open our hearts to him, and let him pour in the balm of his grace and truth. In the first four verses then of John 14, the Lord Jesus provides the disciples with the divine therapy for this condition of heart.

Here he is dealing with human frailty and failure. There are at least four elements in this therapy which Jesus brings to the troubled hearts of the disciples. The first is this, and it's really implicit within the whole background, the amazingly selfless love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The amazingly selfless love of the Lord Jesus Christ. I tell you when I was studying these chapters, this is the thing that came home to me again, and again, and again. Because you see, the really striking thing about it all is that Jesus himself was filled with heaviness and sorrow, of a depth and dimension unknown to men, because it was the sorrow of bearing the world's sin and the Father's wrath.

Behold and see, we sing in the Messiah, if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow. Yet throughout the whole of his experience of bearing this kind of sorrow, and knowing that in front of him as he left the upper room, there was this cup that was waiting for him to drink. The cup of the judgment of God on sin, the cup of all the agonies of the sins of men.

And yet facing all this, he is apparently quite thoughtless of his own sorrow, and only taken up with theirs. They are unable to enter into his affliction, and there was no man in the world who could enter into his sorrow. But in all their afflictions, he was afflicted.

Now that's why the great text for this whole ministry of Jesus is in chapter 13, verse 1. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end. You know beloved, as we gather here at Keswick with all kinds of different needs, there is nothing in the whole universe, there is no treasure that the whole Bank of England can give to us, like the love of Jesus for his own. The amazingly selfless love of the Lord.

Maybe God means to bring some of us here in these days, just to bathe us in his love. Secondly, the gracious realism of the Lord. Do you notice immediately before chapter 14, in verse 37 of chapter 13, Peter has been protesting that whatever happens, the Lord can count on him.

He will remain faithful even unto death, and Peter says to him, Lord why cannot I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you. He has turned in other parts of the Gospels upon his fellow disciples, you remember. Because he's got a very unrealistic assessment of himself as Simon Peter, it's one of the characteristics of the man.

And he looks at these other men, and Jesus is saying, the shepherd will be smitten, and the sheep will be scattered. And he says, Lord I don't know about all these other fellows. He said, I don't think you can probably trust them.

He said, but you can count on me. You see in chapter 13, verse 38, Jesus faces Peter with the stark realities about himself, and that's very like him. That's part of his therapy.

Will you lay down your life for me? He says to Peter, truly I say to you, the cock will not crow till you have denied me three times. You see, the Lord's therapy is not to retreat into a world of make-believe, but to face us with realities. That's what he does when he draws us to his heart of love.

It's not to cover over the truth about us. It's not to bring us to the place where we are hiding from the facts, or hiding from our true selves. The glorious thing about the Lord Jesus Christ is that he draws the real truth right out into the open, and he loves us still.

It's a very blessed thing, you know, when you're in the company of somebody where you don't need to pretend, isn't it? We all have a great tendency to be actors in one form or another, isn't that true? And it's a glorious thing to be able to rest, and relax, and not need to try to pretend to be something different than you are. And that's the background to the third element in the Lord's ministry, to the disciples troubled hearts. That is a great step forward, you know, when a man has come to terms with himself, and that's what Jesus is seeking to do with Peter.

Seeking to bring him face to face with the things that are naturally true of him, in his background, his temperament, his personality, and everything else. I find there are many young people today who are running away from their background. It's a wonderful thing to let Jesus face you with the truth about yourself, and tell you that it's you, just as you are, that he is able to deal with, and heal, and bless, and save.

But it leads us into the third element, which is, in John chapter 14, 1, the trustworthiness of God. You remember the artificial nature of chapters in the Bible, and read it like this, from chapter 13, 38, through into chapter 1. The last phrase of chapter 13 is, you will deny me three times, the cock will not crow till you have denied me three times. But let not your heart be troubled.

Believe in God, believe also in me. Now do you see what Jesus is doing? Here he is faced with the frailty, and fickleness, and weakness of these men, like Simon Peter. And he says, here is the truth about you.

But let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. These words should be, incidentally, as in the Revised Standard Version, I believe, both imperatives.

If you have unauthorized version, you will notice it is, you believe in God, indicative mood, and then believe also in me, imperative mood. I take them to be both imperatives, so that it should be, let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

Now the point is, you see, that the disciples may be fickle and faithless, but the Lord is so utterly trustworthy, that he urges the disciples to rest their confidence on him. Where are they going to look for a rock to rest on? Where are they going to find an anchor to hold them, as the storm is about to break upon them? You know the kind of question that arises, when you're in this kind of situation, and it seems as if the gathering clouds are everywhere, and the storm is about to break. Well now Peter says, Lord you can rely on me.

And Jesus says to him, ah no, the source of cure for the troubled heart is this. Believe in God, believe also in me. Rest everything you are, my child, on what I am, what God is.

It's everything in the Godhead that your anchor. And you will notice the particular realms to which Jesus points the disciples. He urges them to rest their confidence on the Father and the Son in three ways.

First of all, on the wisdom of God, verse 2. In my Father's house are many rooms. In other words, he is speaking to them about what's happening as he goes from them. And Jesus says, he has wisdom and understanding about where he is going.

He knows what they do not know. He's going to his Father's house, you see. And the disciples are exercised about this, they do not know.

But now Jesus says to them, now let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. The place I'm going to is my Father's house, and I'll tell you about it, because I know about this.

He has the wisdom which they do not have. And you will perhaps have noticed in chapter 16, verse 30, how the disciples have moved on to rest in this kind of wisdom. Now this is the resting place for the believer.

In chapter 16, verse 30, the disciples say to Jesus, not now we know everything, but these wonderful words, now we know that you know. You got that? We know that you know. Now that's enough for the believer.

That's resting on the wisdom of God, beloved. And there is nothing more blessedly secure than this. We know that you know.

He says, in my Father's house are many mansions. Trust me to know about where I'm going, and what I'm doing. Now that's what the Lord says to you in days of trouble, is it not? He says, I want you to trust me to know what I'm doing.

That's what he said to Simon Peter when Peter was resisting Jesus, washing his feet. He says, what I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. And he wanted Peter to trust him, to say to him, Lord I know that you know.

Now that's a great thing to be able to say in the darkness. I know that you know. Resting on his wisdom.

Resting not only on the wisdom of God, but on the Word of God. You will notice in verse 2, the second half of the verse. Now I prefer the authorized versions translation of this.

If it were not so, I would have told you. And then a period, I go to prepare a place for you. If you have the revised standard version, you will notice it says, if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? I think the authorized version is better.

If it were not so, I would have told you. Now there is a great testimony, beloved, to the absolute sufficiency of the Lord's Word for the Lord's people. Do you see what Jesus is saying? Believe in God, believe also in me.

He says if it were not so, I would have told you. I wouldn't have left you without a word about that. There is not an area of the believer's life for which the Lord has not provided a word.

And he says I want you to rest in my wisdom that I know what you don't know. In my word that I would have told you if you had needed to know about this. So he says I want you to rest in my word.

I would have spoken a word to you about it. Resting on the Word of God. Thirdly, their faith is to rest in the work of Christ.

The last sentence of verse 2. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. Now that phrase, I go to prepare a place for you, does not primarily mean, I believe, that Jesus is preparing a special corner in heaven for each of us.

That may well be a lovely truth, but it is not, as I think, what the Lord is teaching here. What he is saying here is this, that what he is about to do by his death and resurrection and return is to accomplish a salvation which will be full salvation for all these men who have hearts that are troubled. I go to prepare a place for you.

Speaks of his death and of his resurrection and of his ascension into glory and of his coming again. He goes on to say, if I go I will come and take you to myself that where I am there you may be also. It's his finished work that the Lord Jesus is speaking of in all its fullness.

Now he says, you have to rest on this. Do you see? What seems to you to be an agonizing sorrow. What seems to the world to be a great tragedy of a life cut off in early manhood is in fact the eternal plan of God for the salvation of these people.

That's what I'm going for. So he says, you have to rest on the wisdom of God. You have to rest on the word of God and you have to rest on the work of the Savior.

And beloved, if you're resting there, you're resting indeed. Our faith and confidence as Jesus are to be specific. They are to rest on his boundless wisdom, on his infallible word, and on his saving work.

And that leads me to the fourth of these elements in our Lord's therapy for his troubled disciples. And it is not only the amazingly selfless love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the fact that he was graciously realistic in all his dealings with his disciples, and that God was trustworthy in his wisdom, his word, and his works. But the fourth element you will notice is the sure hope of glory.

Verse 3, when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am there you may be also. Now that coming again of which Jesus speaks, and coming, has many references in John's Gospel and even within these chapters. But I think you will readily see, if you look at verse 3, that the significance of the coming is the ultimate coming.

The second coming, as we say, of our Lord Jesus Christ, is returned to consummate history, to wind up. God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. Beloved, I say to you, heavenly mindedness is the key to earthly usefulness.

And we need to remind ourselves that there is a dimension in our salvation which is much neglected in evangelical circles, and it is this. We are not only saved by grace, through faith, we are saved in hope. It was said of godless Samuel Rutherford, a great Scotsman, that he had his feet on the ground, his hands to the plow, and his heart in heaven.

Peter learned this great lesson, didn't he? He was listening to our Lord, speaking these words, do you remember, in the first epistle of Peter, chapter 1, verse 3, says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope, to an inheritance imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, a sure hope of glory. Now from verse 5 to verse 11, Jesus goes on to elaborate the sense in which they are to trust him, and he does so in answer to two questions, you will notice. One from Thomas in verse 5, how can we know the way? And one from Philip in verse 8, how can we see the Father? Now it's important to see that the answer to both these questions is in Christ.

The answer to the question, how can we know the way? In verse 6, I am the way, says Jesus. The answer to the question, how can we see the Father? In verse 9, he who has seen me has seen the Father. Now the central point of these verses 6 to 11, is that everything in Christian salvation is found in Christ.

And if we are found in him, then there is no need for our hearts to be troubled. That in summary, is what Jesus is saying. It's of great significance, you will notice, that Jesus is not only the destination of the believer, I will take you to myself, and the guide on the journey, I will come again and take you, but he is also the way by which we travel.

I am the way. Now in all these great personal claims that the Lord Jesus makes between verse 6 and the end of verse 11, the dominant idea seems clearly to be of Jesus as the way to the Father. Of course we could spend the whole of our time on these verses alone.

He is speaking about himself as the great mediator who reveals God to men and brings men to God. And this is how they are to understand both his going and his coming. If you look at these very familiar words in verse 6, which Jesus is speaking in answer to Thomas, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No man comes to the Father but by me. The first claim seems really to be expounded in the other two. And I want us to look at them in that way.

He is the way in the sense that he reveals God to us as the truth and takes away our spiritual blindness so that to know him is to know God. To see Jesus is to see God, verse 9. And to hear Jesus is to hear God, verse 10. Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me.

Now you would expect speaks the words, but it's actually does his work. And the reason is that very often in John's gospel the deeds of God are his words and the signs by which he speaks. So that he is the way in the sense that he reveals God to us as the truth.

When they are seeking the way to the Father and wondering what is this way, Jesus says I am the way in the sense that he reveals the Father to them. Now there is the Christian answer and it is Christ as the answer to man's first great problem as he seeks to come to know God. The problem of his ignorance and blindness.

God has spoken in Jesus to dispel our darkness. And it's in the same area that Philip touches in his question in verse 8. Show us the Father. We are still in the realm of revelation.

He says show us the Father. We do not see God and the place where God is to be known is in Jesus. Jesus says to him have I been so long time with you Philip and yet you do not know me.

He who has seen me has seen the Father. The place where God is to be known in other words, where truth is to be found about God is in Jesus Christ. The place where God is to be seen is in Jesus Christ.

The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is to be found in the face of Jesus. So Jesus appeals to Philip to trust him as the revealer of the Father. And you will notice that this is a trust which Jesus makes exclusively his own.

When men want to know God and see what it is what he is like we have only one reliable place to point to and that is to Jesus. But there is another need which man has and it's his deeper problem. Not just that he is ignorant of God and confused and needing to be sorted out.

You know it's a very great mistake when we make the Christian gospel restricted to that. That men are searching for God and they can't find him. They're confused and distorted in their thinking as certainly modern man is in the 1970s.

And the gospel of Christ comes and it sorts out his thinking. It leads him into the truth and we convince men of the truth as it is in Christ. But there is something infinitely deeper.

Man is not just ignorant of God and confused. His deepest problem is that he is dead in trespasses and sins. And his need is not just to be sorted out but to be resurrected.

And so Jesus is the way to the Father in the second sense. Not only as the truth who reveals God but as the life who brings men resurrection into everlasting life. He gives them eternal life as he says in John 17.

Well now let's summarize these first 11 verses. They are sandwiched between two appeals in verse 1 and verse 11. For faith in the Father and the Son.

You will notice again in verse 11 believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves. We are to trust him therefore in his going to be our sin bearer and mediator. In his coming to lead us to heaven and between his going and his coming to provide us in his word and wisdom with everything needful to salvation.

Now in verses 12 to 20 Jesus turns from himself as the object of the believer's faith to the disciples to show them how this trusting and believing in him will affect their lives. And it will do so in three ways described in three sets of three verses. They are almost paragraphed out this way in the revised standard version if that's the version that you are following.

In verses 12 to 14 this trusting in the Lord which Jesus encourages in verses 1 to 11 will produce in them the work of faith. Truly truly I say to you he who believes in me will also do the works that I do and greater works than these. In verses 15 to 17 it will produce the labor of love if you love me you will keep my commandments.

And in verses 18 to 20 it will produce the patience of hope. Verse 18 I will not leave you desolate I will come to you yet a little while and the world will not see me but you will see me in that day you will know. Well now let us look at these briefly as it must be.

First the work of faith in verses 12 to 14. What Jesus is saying is if you are ready to trust me you see and this must have been a very wonderful thing for these beleaguered disciples to hear. If you are ready to trust me he says it is not just that I have got a comforting word for your spirit to hold you up and anchor you in the midst of the storm.

I have a ministry for you says Jesus. Do you grasp this? He says I have a ministry for you. He who believes in me will also do the works that I do and greater works than he these will he do because I go to my father.

So that his going to the father far from being the end of the ministry is just the beginning of it. He says you will do greater works than these. Now that's a very wonderful thing to somebody who is knowing his weakness and weariness, his sin and his failure, a sense of bewilderment and the awful experience of life seeming to tumble in upon him.

For the Lord to come and not just say to him my child I'll hold you up even although you're weak and down and weary even although you've failed me even although you're going to deny me. It's not just that I'll hold you I've got a ministry for you. Oh let the Lord Jesus say that into your heart as he said to Peter as he drew back to himself by the lake side in John chapter 21 and said to him Peter not only do you love me but he said I've got a ministry for you feed my lamb feed my sheep.

Beloved that's what the Lord is like and this blessed and astonishing promise was fulfilled in the book of Acts. Not that the disciples performed more dramatic miracles than Jesus that's not what he is speaking about. The greater works refer as Bishop Ryle says to the spiritual work of conversion.

That's the greater work. When on that day of Pentecost thousands of men and women were swept into the kingdom of God and the Holy Spirit came down and worked the work in the hearts of men. The greater works of the spiritual work of conversion.

Jesus in other words by his going is doing that work which will make the powerful preaching of the word and the conversion of men possible. Do you know these words of James Denny? He says Jesus came not primarily to preach a gospel. There are many people who see in Jesus only a great teacher.

He says Jesus came not primarily to preach a gospel but that there might be a gospel to preach. Now think about that and in verses 13 and 14 Jesus calls their attention to the source of this power that he is promising them for their greater works. Verse 13 whatever you ask in my name I will do it that the father may be glorified in the son.

If you ask anything in my name I will do it. So the works that he forecasts have two characteristics about them. One they will be his works.

It is not that the disciples are going to be more gifted than the Lord Jesus. It is that the Lord Jesus by his ascension and by his coming again in the Holy Spirit is going to continue to do greater things in the world. Now that's what Lucas got hold of at the beginning of Acts.

He says the former treatise of Theophilus I wrote of all that Jesus began both to do and teach. He began it in the gospel. He continued it in greater glory in the Acts.

Now that's what Jesus is referring to here and that's the first thing about these greater works. They will be performed by the Lord. The second thing is this that they will be performed by the Lord in answer to the

prayers of the Lord's people.

You got that? The greatest ministry that he is going to give to them is the ministry of prayer. Is there some Christian brother or sister here this morning who is sitting saying it's all right for him talking to people about whom the Lord is going to give a ministry. But that's not me at my age with my situation and my time of life or my inadequacy.

Beloved here is the greatest ministry of all. That's the ministry that matters. I tell you I wouldn't have dared come here to Ketik this week if I did not know that there were people who had this ministry and were bearing my brothers and myself up before the Lord day and night all over the world.

That's the ministry. That's the real work of faith. How greatly we need to know this.

We got our language all wrong haven't we really because we talk about somebody who's praying for the work. You know beloved it's prayer that is the work. Prayer is the real work and that's why there are so few people ready to give themselves to it.

The work of faith, the labor of love. I cannot believe General that your clock is right. Whenever I cross the border they start putting them round at twice the normal speed.

The labor of love verses 15 to 17 and this is amplified in verses 21 to 24. If you love me says Jesus you will keep my commandments. What is the labor of love which believing in Jesus will produce? Well now the answer Jesus gives is this you will keep my commandments.

The disciples sorrow and distress at Jesus departure you will remember is an evidence of their love for him. Sorrow and distress when someone is leaving is an evidence of love. They grieve most who love most and it's an evidence of their love for Jesus.

But now Jesus asks what is the real evidence of love? It's not emotion beloved. Great as emotion ought to be in the life of a child of God but it's not emotion that's the evidence of love. There is a moral and ethical content in the evidence of love and it's this if you love me you will keep my commandment.

There is a further amplification of this in verses 21 to 24 where Jesus says he who has my commandments and keeps them he it is who loves me. Contrary wise he who loves me will be loved by my father and I will love him and manifest myself to him. And then in verse 23 if a man 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.

But on the other hand in verse 24 he who does not love me does not keep my words. So the evidence of love for Jesus is obedience. Now we need to stay with this truth for a moment because it is something vital to teach us both about our personal experience and about our personal evangelism.

What is the secret of a real experience of the love of God and the reality of his presence? Do you notice what Jesus says in verse 23? If a man loves me he will keep my word and the result of that will be my father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him. Now the home is the same word that Jesus uses for the father's home in heaven and he says if a man obeys my word my father will love him. That's what will draw down the love of God and the smile of God upon a life.

It's obedience to his word that does it and the heart of such a believer will become heaven upon earth. See that? No wonder Bishop Ryle says there is more of heaven and earth to be obtained than most

Christians are aware of. But this is something to say not only about our personal experience but about our personal evangelism because Judas in verse 22 you will notice after Jesus has said that he who has my commandments and keeps them in verse 21 he it is who loves me and he who loves me will be loved by my father and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

In other words the presence and reality and beauty of the Lord and the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him. But Judas not Iscariot the other Judas is concerned about the world. He says this is how the Lord is going to come.

He's going to come to the obedient believer. The believer in his obedience is the one to whom the Lord will show himself. Now says Judas Lord surely we are not going to ignore the world and end up a private little coterie.

In verse 22 how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world. Now if you look at verse 23 it says that Jesus answered him but in fact it looks as if Jesus didn't answer him at all and yet he does most powerfully answer him. How is Christ manifested in the world? Well the answer is in the lives of obedient believers.

We will come to him and make our home with him. Jesus answered him and he said what about the world then Judas? Well here's the way that we are going to reveal ourselves the father and I to the world. We will come and make our home in the heart of the obedient believer and he will be sent out into the world and as he is sent out into the world he will be a tabernacle as it were for the Lord.

Oh you see the world in its rebelliousness Jesus is saying cannot know me and cannot know my father but it can know you and it can see you. Says Martin Luther preaching on this passage the Christ-like heart is the chariot of God by which he comes to the world in grace and conviction. That's an element in the problem of communication which we don't take seriously enough my Christian friends.

Let me say simply as we go on it is a dreadful waste of time to think about the problems of communication with the world divorced from the need of sanctification in the church. Now if you will look back to verses 15 to 17 when a man takes seriously these words of Jesus about obedience being the evidence of love and the key to deep spiritual experience and true personal evangelism he finds himself saying that there are two great problems we all find in seeking to obey the Lord. One is discovering his will and the other is doing it and Jesus says in verses in verse 16 and 17 I have provided for that too he says and in this context we have the first of many references in the upper room discourse to the Holy Spirit.

You'll notice first of all how the whole Godhead conspires together to enable the believer to live a life of consistent obedience. The son prays the father the father sends the spirit and the spirit ministry is here to meet the believer's need of a lack of knowledge and a lack of will to do the will of God. So he will instruct you as the spirit of truth verse 17a and indwell you as the spirit of power in verse 17.

When the lights go out they say that's time to stop. You may think you're going to be here for a long time yet let me tell you I have inside information on this fact and you will not be beyond another few months. The word Jesus uses to speak of the Holy Spirit is this great word paracletos sometimes just transliterated in translation as paraclete which means advocate or comforter as John Wickliffe translated it or counselor.

The Holy Spirit is little mentioned elsewhere in John's gospel until you come to chapter 14 15 and 16 and the word paracletos which is used to describe him as a word that has some legal flavor in it but even a

more personal relationship than the legal ideals and Dr. Leon Morris says it's impossible to find one English word which will cover all that paracletos means. He is the one called alongside to help. He is the one who draws near to us and whom Jesus says will not only dwell with us but be in us.

It's a very significant thing that our Lord speaks of sending in John 14 16 another comforter or counselor or paraclete. In 1 John chapter 2 verse 1 the word is used of Jesus himself and now he promises to send another paraclete. The word means another of the same kind so that the Holy Spirit who is going to come to indwell us and instruct us is going to be another Jesus as someone has said Jesus other self.

Now verses 18 to 20 where Jesus says that the third fruit of confidence and faith in him will be the patience of hope. I will not leave you desolate I will come to you yet a little while and the world will see me no more. It seems that this too is a reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples will see Jesus in a spiritual sense and because he lives they will have the life of God by the indwelling spirit. Well we must go on to close in verses 25 to 31 and I must simply give you the heading. Jesus seeks in verses 25 to 31 to turn the disciples fear and doubt into peace and confidence and he provides them with three particular buttresses for their faith.

First in verses 25 and 26 the spirit of Christ and we will come back to this in chapter 15 and 16. Secondly in verses 27 to 29 the peace of Christ that peace which is Jesus own peace. The natural outcome of all that he had been teaching them that peace which comes from being stayed upon Jehovah where hearts are fully blessed finding as he promised perfect peace and rest.

I will give my peace to you. Can you think of it? The poise that the Lord Jesus had even in this hour he said I will give it to you and lastly in verses 30 and 31 the triumph of Christ. The spirit of Christ, the peace of Christ and the triumph of Christ.

It's not man and human conflict that Jesus sees approaching in verse 30 you will notice he recognizes that Calvary is to be a battleground with the ancient prince of hell but he says he has nothing in me that is he has no power over me. No foothold in my life and so Jesus triumphs over him he says he has no power in me. Now do you see how Jesus gets victory over the devil? For himself and for believers I do as the father has commanded me.

In other words it's his obedience even unto death which produces his triumph. It's full of significance I think that Professor C.H. Dodd says that the closing words of the chapter rise let us go are not an invitation to go out from the upper room someplace else. Dodd very suggestively that these are really military words and they imply in normal Greek usage let us go to meet the advancing enemy.

That's the significance of the meeting. It's a stirring battle cry in other words and may we not take the Lord's teaching and the Lord's word in these verses to our hearts beloved as we go this morning as we go out into the world as we face ourselves and our lives and the world and the flesh and the devil and hear his voice saying to us rise let us go to meet him and we may say Lord we rest on thee and in thy name we go. Let us pray.

Blessed Lord we pray that thou will take thy word in all its riches beyond our searching and teach us its truth and apply it to our hearts and grant us to be greatly blessed thereby and all to the honor and glory of our great and glorious Savior even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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