

**An Opportunity to Change the World-Part I**  
**Pastor Ty Blackburn**  
**John 14:12-14**  
**October 26, 2014**

Amen. Please turn with me in your Bibles to John 14. We're moving into Verses 12-14. We'll be covering those this Sunday, and Lord-willing, next Sunday. The title of the message is 'An Opportunity to Change the World'. I have to confess, when I really started unpacking this passage, and thinking it through, that I found a little bit of resistance in my own theological perspective. Being a reformed and conservative, it was hard to look at this in some ways because I thought about some of the extremes that you see in the evangelical world today, where all the emphasis is on the significance of man. What *you* can do. *You* can be a world-changer, this kind of stuff. That appeals to our pride, and our vanity, but when you really look at this text honestly, Jesus is offering nothing less than that.

Now it is misunderstood, mischaracterized, and people that often major on these things, are showing that their hearts aren't really right. That the real way that you change the world is first of all, the way that you become significant is it starts with denying yourself, taking up your cross and following Christ. That is the way you become significant according to the Scriptures, because of the fall of man, because of our sin. But Jesus is going to say something in this passage that is absolutely staggering. When you really unpack it, and you look at it, and feel its force, it is mind-blowing.

Reminding me of a story I heard some time back about Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple Computers. Some time back in the 80's, I believe it was, he was trying to recruit a top executive from a soft drink company to handle his operations, his business side of the company. Steve Jobs said to him, after they'd been debating, dialoguing about the potential package, and the opportunity, Apple still wasn't a very big company at that time. Jobs said, "You can go on making sugar water, but I'm offering you a chance to change the world!" I think too often we are content to go on making sugar water. And think about Apple, I saw a, you know with Jobs dying a year or two ago, a lot has come out about his life, and certainly he's not a person to emulate. He is a man of the world, a man of vanity, but he certainly was gifted by his Creator with some extraordinary gifts.

Someone was commenting about him, one of the people they interviewed on the PBS special, was talking about how he had fundamentally altered so many different industries. Think about that. I mean, he started out in the computer

industry, and he was working to fundamentally alter the computer industry. Making them smaller, and more compact, you know we carry around an iPad, and soon we'll be able to carry computers around, I don't know how small they're going to get. But he radically altered the music industry with the whole iTunes revolution, iPods. And certainly he altered the telephone industry, and to have that kind of impact is really extraordinary. So when he asked that guy, "You could go on making sugar water," he was pretty right, wasn't he? "I'm giving you an offer to change the world in the temporal sense." When you look at the content of the promise that Jesus makes in Verse 12, it is on that order, but in reality it is far greater. We're going to start reading at Verse 7 to get the context, but our focus this morning is Verse 12. Next week we're going to look at Verses 13 and 14, because I think 12-14 is one section, and I'll explain that as we go along. But let's look at Verse 7, remembering Verse 12 is what we're really going to focus on this this morning.

***John 14:7-14 ~ If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.” 8 Philip \*said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” 9 Jesus \*said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. 12 Truly, truly, 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 the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.***

Let's pray together.

*Our Father, we come to You this morning, and we ask that You might speak to us through Your word. That Your Spirit might work in our minds, in our hearts, to take the word of God, and reveal to us the Son of God. That we might see You in all Your glory, and we might change, and be more like Him. We pray in His name, Amen.*

‘An Opportunity to Change the World’. What I want us to do today is consider really this staggering promise that He makes in Verse 12, and we’re going to look at it next week as well. We’re going to start by looking at two W’s, and then an H, to kind of help you follow the flow. I’m going to talk about *Why?* Why He makes the offer, why He says what He says, why He makes the promise, why He makes the offer. *Why?* But we are going to spend most of our time this morning on *What?* What precisely is the offer? What does it really mean? Then next time we are going to look at *How?* How do we really apply this and experience it?

1) Why?:

Why does He say this at the point in time that He does? I mean, when you look at the context carefully, you see that Jesus is calling for faith. ‘*Believe*’ is a word that occurs six times in the first 12 verses of this chapter, and in the imperative form four times. His command is: “Believe. Believe. Believe. Believe.” Verse 1, look, He says:

***John 14:1 ~ ...believe in God, believe also in Me.***

Then Verse 11, two more times the command ‘Believe’.

***John 14:11 ~ Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.***

So He’s making a call for faith. Now remember He is making this call to the eleven. Judas is gone. He is talking to the eleven disciples on the night before His crucifixion, who already know Him, and have, in a sense, believed Him in a saving way. He has made clear they are already clean, they are already saved, but He is calling for more faith, a deeper faith, a deeper sense of trust in Himself. As He does, “Believe Me. Believe Me,” He, in a sense, gives a reason to believe, and that reason is enticement, the opportunity. “Believe Me because if you do believe Me you are going to do the works that I do.”

Now what He is getting at here I think is the idea because He created us, He understands how we operate, what makes us tick. He is, in a sense, giving them the key to understanding really the longing of the human heart for significance. He is saying, “You, and everyone else who believes in Me, will do the things that I am doing. You will be a part of something incredibly impactful. I’m offering you an opportunity to change the world.” He appeals to man’s intrinsic need for significance, to make an impact, to be a part of something bigger than ourselves.

Don't you long to make a difference? Well, God made you long to make a difference.

You see this in a lot of different ways, this idea of longing to make a difference. It explains a lot of odd behavior we see in society. I think deciding to be a part of something bigger than ourselves, this explains the hysteria around college sports, or pro sports. But seriously, I mean, why do people get so hysterical about it? So fired up about it? You know, driving around they've got the flags flowing all week long. Whatever team they follow, there they are, flying along the way, right? What is that? They are just saying, "Hey, I'm a part of something. I'm a part of this group." They call themselves 'nation' or whatever, right?

It also explains like even another one of those interesting and odd behaviors, you see it a lot more in younger people, the environmental movement. I mean, there is nothing wrong with recycling. It is a good thing, and taking care of our planet the best we can, the little things that we can do. But the whole idea that the environmental movement, that, "We are saving the planet. You know, I'm driving a Prius. I'm saving the planet. What are you doing? I'm better than you. I'm making a difference, you see? I threw my plastic bottle in the recycle bin. You threw yours in the trash. What are you thinking?" And the whole idea, I mean, it's ridiculous, that we can destroy the planet is a picture of how man flips around this idea of significance. We think we can destroy the planet? I've got news for you, what God has built, we cannot destroy. No way! Now it doesn't mean we still shouldn't be responsible. I'm not saying that, but let's put it in perspective. Carbon emissions are not going to destroy the planet. Man has this longing though to be a part of something, and the idea that we could destroy the planet appeals to our sinful flesh, which perverts this innate desire for significance. But there really is a God-given desire to be able to make a difference.

Well God created us for significance. We saw that when we looked at Genesis 1 earlier. He created us in His image to rule as His regent, that He has put in place. He created man to rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, to make a difference, but you only find significance in relationship to God. That is why people are striving after all of these things. Whatever it is, whether it is their wearing the ribbon because they are supporting whatever cause it is. There are a lot of good causes, but the whole idea of, *Where do you get your significance?* Too many of us are content to make sugar water when it comes to significance, and to find too much significance in these things when God has given us the key to significance is in realizing who we are in Christ, and being about His business every day. That is the point of this passage. That is why He makes this offer.

We were talking about this the other day at men's Bible study. We have men's Bible study on Thursday mornings at 6:30, and we're doing systematic theology, talking about the doctrine of God. It came up the idea of wanting to make a difference because of what we were looking at. The whole pink October thing, you know? You turn on a NFL football game, a college football game, and they were wearing pink. Something just wrong about that in itself, isn't there? But it is all over the place. "We are making a difference." The irony is that you could only really make a difference if you are connected to God. And then there is this amazing, astonishing irony. I said that to find God, you have to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Christ. To be saved you have to disown yourself, to say, "I am nothing." Yes, that is the Gospel because sin has so marred us, it has so messed us up, it has wrecked us, and to come to God you must disown yourself, and come to Him. "There is nothing in my hand I bring. I am of no significance," and you come to God. Then as you are changed by the power of God, you become something incredibly significant. But the irony is, that as you go down, you find that He lifts you up.

And it's always been God's intention to give man great significance. That is what I was bringing up in Genesis 1. When we talked about this in men's Bible study, we were talking about the fact, isn't it astonishing that after God makes man, before the fall, in Genesis 2, just ponder this sometime. He plants the garden, and He brings all of the animals to Adam to name them. I mean, what is with that? Why would God leave naming to man? Because He is sharing an incredible significant, and important piece of His work with His created regent, the one He wants to rule. This is God's true heart to you.

Man runs away from God because we feel like, and this is what sinners are doing, they feel like when they come to Him they'll lose themselves, they won't be significant. But the reality is, if you will come to God, you will find your meaning, you will find significance. This, that idea in Genesis 2, this idea of significance, in Genesis 1, the image of God, Jesus is now bringing into an extraordinary new sense in our passage in John 14:12. The Creator, Jesus Christ, is stooping down again to say, "Would you like to be a part of something big?" Just like He did when He said to Adam, "Would you like to be a part of something big? Name the animals." He is saying that to the disciples, and the good news is, and the amazing thing is He is saying it to you and me in this text. That is why He says it. He knows that we long for significance, and He's showing us the path.

2) What?:

But what precisely is the offer? We said it's an offer to change the world, but let's look at it a little more carefully. Verse 12:

***John 14:12 ~ Truly, truly, 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 the Father.***

The first thing I want to note under the *What?* is the fact that the promise is given in two parts. The offer consists of a two-part promise. He says, "He who believes in Me,..." It's not just for the disciples, it is for everyone who believes in Christ. And it is singular, every single individual who believes in Christ. He makes that really clear because He says, look in Verse 12, ... ***the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do;...*** You see that repeated twice, ...***he will do...*** But the promise is in two parts, what He will do. "First of all, He will do the works that I do." That is breathtaking. Jesus is saying that, "He who believes in Me will do the works that I do." Wow! And in John's Gospel, the careful reader who is thinking about what he has read, when you are reading it and you understand what it is saying, it ought to just almost leave you stupefied. "What?"

Because remember how John organizes his Gospel, the first half of it, the first 12 chapters are organized around the signs that Jesus did. A very key word in the Gospel of John is the word '*signs*', and '*works*' is related to that word '*signs*'. It starts in Chapter 2, Verse 11, after He does His first miracle in John's Gospel. Remember He turns the water into wine? And it says this was the first of His signs that Jesus did. The first one, turning the water into wine. He goes on to describe, there are seven signs that we saw as we were working through these chapters of John between Chapter 2 and Chapter 11.

You have the first sign, He changes water into wine, John 2. At the end of John 4, you have the second sign where He heals the nobleman's son. Remember the nobleman comes from Capernaum. Jesus tells him, He is not even near the man's son who is sick, He says, "Go your way, he is healed," and of course he got healed at the moment Jesus said that, from a distance. Then in John 5, the third sign, He heals the lame man who has been lame for 38 years at the Pool of Bethesda. Then John 6, He feeds 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish. That's 5,000 men, probably more like 20,000 total people, they were just counting the men, 5,000 men. Then He walks on water. That is the fifth sign, there in John 6. And the sixth sign is in John 9, when He heals a man who was born blind. The seventh sign, of course, is when He raises Lazarus from the dead. And the idea is these

signs are attesting to the reality that the Messiah has come, that Jesus Christ is truly the Savior of the world. These miracles are testifying to that reality.

So at first, when you hear this, the first thought is, “This means we are supposed to do things like that! We’re going to do works like He does,” but it gets even more amazing. He says, ... *the works that I do, he will do also*;... and here is the second part, *and greater works than these he will do*;... Now there must be something misprinted. The disciples must have thought, “Jesus, did You misspeak?” This is utterly unbelievable, and that’s really the reason that He started off the sentence in Verse 12 the way He did, *Truly, truly, I say to you*,... Twenty-five times in John’s Gospel Jesus begins a statement like that, *Truly, truly, I say to you*,...

In the Greek text, the way that they wrote down this verse in Greek, they used the transliteration of a Hebrew word (אָמֵן) “*Amēn, amēn, I say to you*,...” “Amen, amen...” we use that word. The same transliteration into English ‘*amēn*’, in Greek it came from a Hebrew word ‘*aman*’, which meant ‘*certainty, reliability, trustworthiness*’, and so when He says, *Truly, truly*,... He is saying, “Listen, you can count on this. This is trustworthy. This is certain. This is reliable.” It is to confirm and emphasize what He is about to say. He says, “Look, I know what I’m about to say is incredible to you, it is unbelievable to you, but listen very carefully to what I’m going to say, and believe it.” It’s hard to believe, but absolutely true. Now, I don’t know, none of us have done the signs that Jesus did, so obviously there is something more here to it. What does this mean? We know that it is in two parts, but what exactly does it mean, particularly the second part of the promise, that we’re going to do greater things than Jesus? What does greater mean? Does it mean we’re going to do more in quantity? Is it greater in quantity, or greater in quality? Well, I think it’s not greater in quantity. We’re not going to do more things than Jesus did. When you interpret that within John’s Gospel, when you turn over to Chapter 20, right before the purpose statement of the book of John, he says in John 20:30, he said, “I told you about these signs,” but he says, “I told you about the seven signs,” but look at Verse 30:

***John 20:30 ~ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;***

“He did many more miracles than what I’ve written in this book.” Now look at Chapter 21, Verse 25, the last verse of the book.

***John 21:25 ~ And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they \*were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself \*would not contain the books that \*would be written.***

Jesus did so many things. He was going, every moment of His day He was doing miracles, and confirming His identity. So we can't outdo Him in quantity, no way, and the reality is of course, we're not really going to outdo Him, but we've got to hear what He is saying. He is saying it for effect, to get our attention, that the one who believes really is a part of something so staggering that it is of a different quality than what Jesus did during His earthly ministry. It's about the quality of the miracles, the works, the signs. It's a sense of the one who believes is going to do something more extraordinary. It's related to the whole idea of it's captured in that verse in Matthew 11:11.

Remember when Jesus was talking about John the Baptist? He says, "Among those born of women, no one is greater than John the Baptist." He's basically making the statement that of all of the people that God has used in the Old Testament, from Abel all the way up to the end to John the Baptist, you've got Noah, Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel, Job, all these different people. All those up to Christ, John the Baptist is the greatest. Wow, but then He says something staggering in Matthew 11:11. He says, "Yet, the least of these in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." What He's saying is if you are on this side of Calvary, John the Baptist and everybody before him was on this side of Calvary, and if you're on this side of Calvary, you are greater than John the Baptist, because you are a part of a different order of things. And what He's saying in this verse is the way that we do greater works than He has done at this point is that His earthly ministry was pre-cross and resurrection. He said, "Look at all the impressive things that I've done," that when John wrote it down he said, "If we could write them all down and talk about them, the books wouldn't even be able to be contained in the world." Yet the reality is that after the cross, after the resurrection, it's going to be even more amazing. That's exactly what He's saying.

Now, how is that? Before we say how that is, let me point this out really quickly to you. In Verse 12, He says:

***John 14:12 ~ ... greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.***



That's a very important phrase there. "The basis upon which these greater works will be done is because I go to the Father." He's speaking of His cross, resurrection and ascension, that when the Son of Man has offered His sacrifice, when the Son of Man has been resurrected from the dead, when the Son of Man rises to the right hand of the Father, and now the dust of the earth, human flesh, sits enthroned at the right hand of God, in that moment, something happens that is radically different than ever before, and that now everything that happens on that side of His ascension and session in seating at the right hand, and the giving of the Holy Spirit, is of a different order and is far greater than the miracles that Jesus did. Now isn't that just counterintuitive?

Haven't you found yourself thinking, "I wish I could see some miracles like that"? Wouldn't that have been amazing? We pray for healing and we'd love to see somebody healed dramatically, somebody lame just get up and start walking. Joni Erickson, the precious believer, if she would just get up and start walking, wouldn't that be amazing? Everybody would know she's been lame for more than 38 years. But He's saying that what we will do is greater than what He did. Now, what we do is because He does it through us. This is going to become clear as we read on. We're not going off into wild charismatic theology, but what we're going to see is sometimes our fear of that can cause us to miss what Jesus is really saying, and what He's saying is what you and I are involved in is so earth-shattering, is so incredible, that really stop making sugar water, and be a part of something big, because every time you're a part of Gospel ministry, you're a part of something of earth-shattering importance. That's what He's saying.

And the way that we understand this is that this idea of what happens after the cross and before the cross, and what His signs really were—in fact, the word *sign* is an important word to understand. I mentioned earlier the seven signs that He does, and the word is used actually 17 times in the book, and the word translated *sign* or *signs* in John is miracles which lead to something out of and beyond themselves. That's the word study definition. Miracles which lead to something out of and beyond themselves. The miracle itself isn't the main point. It's what it points to. It's like a sign. You know when you see a road sign, the road sign isn't—it says turn left to find so-and-so state park. You don't stop and pitch your tent beside the sign, do you? No, the sign points to something outside it and separate from itself. That's what He's saying. The miracles, the word that was used throughout John's Gospel for miracles were that these were things whose value was not in what they were but in what they point to.

So in reality, the healing of the blind man, it was extraordinary in what it really was, wasn't it? I mean, this man was blind from birth, and everybody knew he was blind, and he used to beg all the time because that's the only way he could make a living to help his family, his parents take care of him, and suddenly he can see. That's pretty incredible. That's wonderful, but that's not the main point, and that's small in comparison to the reality it points to. In fact, it's tiny in comparison. One man who was blind physically seeing for another 30 years that he's alive, and then he died, compared to the fact that Jesus Christ is the Light of the world, and that people, every single human being that's ever been born since Adam, except for Jesus, was born dead, was born blind. Spiritually blind from birth, we cannot see the Kingdom of God, Jesus told Nicodemus. Unless you're born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God. So the miracle pointed to that reality.

In the feeding of the 5,000 people, I said it was probably like 20,000 when you add up all the children and the ladies there. With five little, small pieces of bread and two fish, and that's amazing, and the people loved that. They came back the next day, saying, "We want seconds. What have you got for us today? Maybe it's something different besides fish." They wanted more food from Heaven, and Jesus said, "You don't understand. I am the true bread which has come down from Heaven." He's saying, "There's a spiritual hunger in your heart. There's spiritual emptiness in your soul, and I am the satisfaction of that, and that is a billion times more important than eating some bread."

The water to wine is the same thing. There was a crisis at a wedding. They ran out of wine too quickly. Jesus' mother comes to Him and says, "They're out of wine. Do something," basically, and He says, "What do I have to do with you? My time has not yet come." And then she looks at the servants and says, "Whatever He says to you, do it." The Father was telling Him it's time. So He changed the water into wine. Remember those pots, and He made the equivalent, I can't remember what it was. I want to say 500 bottles of wine. It was something extraordinary when you add up all the gallons of water that became wine, if you put them in normal wine bottles.

Now, the idea wasn't the alcohol. The idea was that wine was symbolic of joy and the joy of the Messiah. So the fact that this wedding wasn't a wedding catastrophe wasn't the issue. The issue was the Messiah who brings joy into a world full of misery, has come. Now, that's the opportunity that you and I have is we're a part of the bigger issues. We are a part of the bigger miracles. We're only a part of them because Jesus does them through us, but we are a part of something much more amazing than water being changed to wine, or even a dead person rising from

the dead. We're a part of something far greater, according to God, because He says it's greater. You might say, "Well, I don't think it's greater," and I'm telling you, most of the charismatic folks I was talking about earlier want the former rather than the latter, and they are looking at it upside down. You don't realize those things were just to testify to something far greater, and it's not God's nature to want to wow you with signs.

Remember when they came out and asked Him for a sign, and Jesus said, "A wicked and perverse generation asks for a sign. It's wicked of you to want to see Me do something." Now, He did some things, but He didn't do them on demand. Whenever that spirit was there, He wouldn't do the miracles. But the miracles were just a temporary thing to point to the bigger reality. The transformation that happened when Christ died, and rose again, and ascended into Heaven is so great, there's this radical difference. I mean, before the cross, people were saved the same way that they're saved after the cross, by looking to the cross. No one has ever been saved any other way than by looking to the cross. The Gospel, from Genesis to Revelation it's the same. Look to the cross. But until the moment of the cross, until the moment of the resurrection, there was the cross, and the resurrection, and the glorification of Christ, this event, until that, there was a radical difference in the experience of the saved.

We see this in a number of different ways, but one way is in the account—well, let's talk about it after death. When an Old Testament believer died, I think we can piece together, everybody doesn't agree on this, but I think this is pretty clear, myself, that before Jesus died on the cross, rose again, that they were kept in a place called Abraham's Bosom. You have the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke. Do you remember that story? It's about the rich man and Lazarus. Lazarus is a poor man that begs at the rich man's gate, and the rich man doesn't even notice him. They both die and Jesus tells this story, and they're in the afterlife, and the rich man is in torment and suffering in Hades, and he sees Lazarus from a distance, and Lazarus is in Abraham's Bosom in comfort and bliss, and the rich man cries out to Abraham and says, "Will you send Lazarus over here with a drop of water? I'm perishing in this heat, in this fire." Abraham says, "He can't come over to where you are, and you can't come where we are." He says, "Well, go tell my brothers. Send him out of the dead to go tell my brothers to not come to this place," and Abraham says, "If they didn't believe the law and the prophets, they won't believe even if somebody rises from the dead." The point is Abraham's Bosom apparently was in the place of the dead, and it was not yet the fullness of the presence of God.

The other thing that makes this, I think, clear is what happened at the moment Jesus died according to Matthew's Gospel? The moment that He breathed His last, the veil of the curtain in the temple that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, the place where God's presence dwelt in the temple, the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom at the moment Jesus died. Not at the resurrection, but at the moment He died, the way is opened. Now we are able to go into the presence of God and there's a sense in which even the Old Testament saints had a fuller experience of God's blessing and bliss at that moment they were transported into the presence of God. And now for Old Testament believers who during their life before they died, there was a radical change from that era to this era. They were saved. They were born again in some way, but they didn't have the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, after that great event.

It never says about Old Testament believers that they were seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. It says that about you if you're a Christian. You are right now spiritually seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and that only happened as a result of the cross. That's the radical divide between pre-cross and after cross. Always saved by the cross, but don't minimize the moment of the cross. It changed everything. That's why the veil was torn, the ground shook, and remember what also happened at the moment Jesus died? People were resurrected from the dead. There in Jerusalem, in the tombs outside of Jerusalem, it said that people got up out of the grave. They had to stay in the tombs in that area til Sunday, until after Jesus had come forth before they showed themselves, because He's the first fruit. But His death brought them to life.

Now, this means that when we're loving God, and we're in the word of God, and we're ministering to people, the things that we do are greater than what He did in His earthly ministry. Now, let me clear something up really quick. What we do is what He does. We do nothing that He doesn't do. Scripture interprets Scripture.

***John 15:5 ~ ... apart from Me you can do nothing.***

“If you abide in Me, you'll bear much fruit. Apart from Me, you can do nothing.” The works that we do are works that He does in us, and in fact, it's even clear in John 14. There's an analogy with how Jesus' earthly ministry, the works that He did, look what He says in John 14:10, when He's about to tell them to believe on the account of the works, and then in John 14:10, He says:

***John 14:10 ~ ...I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.***

Jesus is saying that His earthly ministry, the miracles that He did, as He lived, through He was fully God, He did not use His prerogatives and power as God. He lived as a Man in dependence upon the Father, and the Father did the works through Him. That's what He's saying, that when you see the works, you see the Father doing the works. And now on this side of Calvary when somebody sees a Christian doing the work, they're seeing Jesus doing the work. This is what Acts 1:1 talks about. It's an interesting beginning to the Acts of the apostles.

Remember Luke is writing to a man named Theophilus, and he wrote the book of Luke to this man, and he writes the book of Acts as a second kind of the sequel to what he wrote before. He says, "Most excellent Theophilus, remember that I wrote to you formerly concerning the things that Jesus began to do, started to do, in His earthly ministry." The book of Luke went all the way up to the resurrection, and now he starts with the ascension, and what he's saying is the Acts of the apostles are the acts of Jesus Christ in them.

Now, this means that when you and I are talking to someone about the things of God, if we were thinking correctly, we would realize that we are doing greater than healing someone. I mean, I said changing water to wine, what does that mean? When you meet with somebody who's an unbeliever, and they're in despair and despondency because of the misery that sin brings upon their life, and you present Christ to them, and they're born again, what you have done is a greater miracle than changing water into wine. You have taken by God's power and God's grace, it's all of Christ, but He's used your mouth. He's maybe used your hands as you consoled someone, and as you've spoken forth the Gospel, what has happened is there has been a fundamental and radical change that is according to Jesus much greater than turning water into wine.

When you go to someone who's paralyzed with fear, crippled by anxiety, and you preach the Gospel to them and they're saved, you've done something greater than healing a lame man. It's on a different order, and God rejoices over it in a greater way than displaying His glory in healing a lame man. Healing a lame man is a small thing. Delivering someone paralyzed by sin is a big thing. And it's not just in evangelism that you do these things. When you talk to another believer who already knows Christ and they're struggling with these particular sins, maybe they're weighed down with guilt, and you point them to the Gospel, you're loosing them and letting them go. It's bigger to God than those miracles.

I mean, healing a blind man is nothing compared to a person who is a convinced atheist who is full of animosity. Somebody was sharing this week about some testimonies that have come out of salvation experiences in the Muslim world where all this terrible stuff is happening with ISIS and all of that, that some of the people who had been involved on the side of the terror and just this wicked, evil tyranny that's going on, that there have been conversions happening. As the Christians have been faithful to God, what is happening? People who are blind are seeing, and it's much greater than physical blindness being healed.

I mean, it's like dead people are being raised. It's much bigger than Lazarus who rose from the dead and lived another 30 years, and then they had to go bury him again. But when you speak the Gospel, and the Spirit of God working through you, and the Son of God manifesting Himself through your paltry efforts, when you're just doing the best you can, and suddenly God transforms somebody, that is something God gets excited about. And we who are called as the people of God, we have an opportunity every day to be involved in these things. He's saying, "Listen, you have an opportunity today to change the world." No, it's not you. It's Jesus, but He has called you to Himself to proclaim His excellence, to use your tongue, to use your life, to use your touch, your hugs, your support, to bring people who are in despair, to joy, to bring people who are in blindness, to see light, to bring people who are in death, to life.

Why would we not be about that? Isn't that amazing? We have this opportunity every day, and we find ourselves feeling purposeless. "I feel like my life has no meaning," a midlife crisis for a Christian. I'm hitting the age where you know I should start wearing the neck chains. But a midlife crisis for a Christian, I mean, that's just ridiculous, isn't it? We can find ourselves thinking those kinds of things, but it's just because we've forgotten. For us, it's only getting better. As long as we're alive, if you were to make 95 years old and you just feel like any day you're going home, one more day is one more opportunity to change the world. I mean, it's many more opportunities in that one day. Every conversation with Christians or with non-Christians is an opportunity. Jesus says when we see it correctly and we know how to apply it properly, we will be used by Him to do things that we'll be rejoicing in Heaven over. What an amazing God that He would give to you and me, people who do not deserve even to be alive, the privilege of being saved and being a part of His Kingdom, and then being a part of His family, His children, and then being coworkers with Him in doing these amazing miracles. How good He is. How merciful He is.

Let's go to Him in prayer...

*Our Father, we thank You for the high calling that You have given to us in Christ. We thank You for the sufficiency of His blood, the reality of justification that is eternal once a person repents and believes, and then the opportunity that You've given us to be a part of something so significant, so amazing, that the repercussions of one word spoken will echo down through eternity. What an amazing thing that You have given to us. We praise You, oh God. Make us worthy of the calling with which we've been called. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.*

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