

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

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Date: 19 May 2024

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[0 : 0 0] And now we come to our Bible reading, and this evening we're reading from John chapter 14, from verse 15 through to the end of verse 27. And I believe that's on page 901 of the church Bibles, if you have one of them. Willie Philip, our senior minister, is preaching a one-off sermon in this passage as we meet Jesus and his disciples partway through the farewell discourse or the Last Supper, as it's commonly known. So John chapter 14, reading from verse 15.

And Jesus says, If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more. But you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he is, 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. Judas, not Iscariot, said to him, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world?

[1 : 5 4] Jesus answered him, If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

Whoever does not love me does not keep my words, and the word that you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled.

Neither let them be afraid. Amen. The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

[2 : 5 7] Father, the Lord endures forever. Well, do turn with me, if you would, to the passage that Stephen read to us in John chapter 14. Now, today is Pentecost Sunday.

Quitsun, as it's called down south. That's the seventh Sunday after Easter, and it celebrates Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit on the church.

Our church tradition doesn't make too much of the liturgical church here. We don't feel the need to be tied to lectionary readings and so on.

One reason being really that it doesn't really favor expository preaching of Scripture. It's hard to really engage with one whole book of the Bible if every week you're jumping around to set readings in different places and so on.

I suppose also the truth is that Scots have got rather long cultural memories, haven't we? We didn't like Archbishop Laud trying to impose his church prayer book upon us back in the 17th century, and it's way, way too soon to consider a change of mind on that one yet.

[4 : 08] I mean, after all, our unofficial national anthem, Flower of Scotland, still singing about Bannockburn, and that was 1314. We haven't got over that one yet, so it'll be some time, I suspect, before we adopt a lectionary.

But, the idea of lectionary readings isn't entirely without merit, and there are some helpful advantages of being prompted to regularly cover key biblical doctrines every year.

I don't think it's harmful. In fact, I think it's very helpful indeed that we do focus very definitely on the incarnation and on the death and resurrection of Jesus every year in the Christmas season, in the Easter season.

It means that we can't go more than a year without being very focused on being clearly reminded on the events and their meaning right at the very heart of our faith.

And, of course, the ministry of the Holy Spirit also is a doctrine of cardinal importance at the very heart of our faith. Indeed, it is at the very heart of the existence of the church.

[5 : 13] So, I thought that having finished our study on Ezekiel last week, and this being Pentecost Sunday, it would give us an opportunity to think for a little while about the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The gift of the Holy Spirit to the church, which is the great blessing of all the fulfillment of God's promises of salvation in the death and in the resurrection and in the ascension of our Lord Jesus, of the Christ, of the promised Messiah of God.

In fact, it's actually just another way, if you like, of looking at what we were actually looking at last Sunday evening. Do you remember in the picture of the great regenerating river of life that was pouring forth from below the altar, the place of sacrifice, in Ezekiel's vision of the ultimate city of God.

From the place of sacrificial death flows the water of saving life, the river of life that brings an end to the reign of death in our world.

And that's exactly the terms that Jesus himself spoke about the coming of the Holy Spirit in his gospel. He spoke about rivers, the living water. And John says by this, he meant the Holy Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive when Jesus was glorified, when Jesus was glorified through the cross and his resurrection.

[6 : 43] And of course, it's also what Jesus spoke about very explicitly to his closest disciples, to the twelve, on the very eve of his death. And that's what we read about here in John chapter 14.

If you remember, we looked at the first section of John chapter 14 the week before Easter. And I thought it would be helpful to look at the rest of the chapter this evening with a particular focus on the message that Jesus gives about the gift of the Holy Spirit, which as we'll see is really two gifts, two inseparable gifts, of the Holy Spirit and of the Holy Scriptures.

And his message is one of very great comfort, comfort to his followers then, but also comfort comfort to all of us still today. Comfort that comes from the promise that Jesus gives that all who are his will always be with him.

Always and never separated from him. With him forever in the Father's house where he says he's gone already to prepare a place for those who are his. But also until then, with him now because through the Holy Spirit, if you look at verse 23 here, through the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son will come to make their home with his people.

With all his people who are truly his even now. Even now. And that means that they will continue to hear his voice and continue to know his presence just as clearly as they did before.

[8 : 23] And that is a very remarkable promise. So let's look at this chapter again. And first of all, let's just remind ourselves of the context. Jesus has come to the end of his public ministry.

His death is approaching rapidly. In John chapter 12, he repeatedly talked about the hour of his death now having come. And in chapter 13, he begins by telling us that he knows that his hour of departure has come.

And he gathers his closest disciples around him. He washes their feet to their great amazement. And he talks in rather mysterious terms about cleansing his loved ones.

And then, of course, he drops a shattering bombshell. One of them was going to betray him. At the end of chapter 13, we read about Judas leaving them.

And the disciples are very confused. They're very afraid. And Simon Peter blurts out, if you look at chapter 13, verse 36, at the end there, Lord, where are you going? And Jesus says, where I'm going, you can't follow me now.

[9 : 36] Why not, says Peter? I'll lay down even my life for you. No, you won't, says Jesus. He'll deny me three times before the cocks crowed in the morning. So this is a scene of high tension, of high emotion, of confusion, of anxiety.

And above all, it is a scene that reveals the weakness of even Jesus' closest followers, even these who are to be his apostles. And yet it's into that situation that Jesus speaks these words that are so well known in verse 1.

Let not your hearts be troubled. And then he says to them all of these things that follow. And you'll see those words are repeated once again in verse 27.

Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. So that phrase really acts as a bookend, bracketing everything in between and showing us that it's all part of one single discourse.

And it begins and ends with words of great reassurance. Let not your heart be troubled. Let not your heart be troubled. And in between these brackets, Jesus' words are recorded by John in answer to three questions from the three disciples.

[10 : 52] You'll see from Thomas in verse 5, then from Philip in verse 8, and then from Judas, not Judas Iscariot, Judas, we'll call him Jude, verse 22.

So you can see there's nothing random about this, is there? It's very carefully crafted as a piece of writing. It's carefully ordered to make a point. The opening words, of course, in verse 1, they're very familiar to us, aren't they?

They're very, very often read at funerals. But remember, it wasn't after a bereavement that Jesus first spoke these words, but it was to those who very shortly were going to feel a great sense of bereavement because Jesus was going to leave them.

He was going to be killed. But the word of comfort that He gave them here was to explain to them that His death wouldn't, in the end, be a cause for sadness, but when they understood it properly, it would be a cause for great joy.

I go, says verse 2, to prepare a place, that is, a dwelling place, a home for you. a home in the Father's house, He calls it.

[12 : 01] And having done so, He says, He's going to come again. He's going to take His friends to be with Him where He is in their true home. Verse 3. What's He talking about?

Well, of course, He's talking about everything. He's been talking about all the way through the Gospel from the very beginning. The Father's house is the home of life. It's the place of abundant life that He came to bring.

I come that they might have life in abundance, life that is everlasting. It's the life that human beings were really made for and which human beings will never be complete until they find it.

The Bible is very clear about that. You see, life as we know it in our lives is not what we were made for. This earth as we know it is not our true home.

That's why human beings are searchers by nature as we all are. That's why we're always on a quest looking for more, seeking more because the Bible tells us God has set eternity in our hearts.

[13 : 08] I often quote C.S. Lewis. He calls it the inconsolable longing that's deep within every one of us. A sense that in this universe as we know it we're actually strangers. the longing to bridge some chasm to another realm is part of our inconsolable secret he says.

And that's how we are. We know that. That's why there's a great spirit of inquiry in the human race. It's why the poets, the writers, the artists, they're feeling after it aren't they in their creativity.

It's why the scientists have an insearchable thirst for knowledge seeking to find out more about how this world works and the great wonders, the mysteries that are still beyond us. And C.S. Lewis, I think, is quite logical.

He says, if I find in myself a longing which this world cannot meet, then it probably means I was made for something more than this world. And yes, says Jesus, you were.

You were made for life in the Father's house. Real life. And I came to this earth, he says, to prepare a place there for my friends, to show you the way, verse 4.

[14 : 26] But we don't know the way, says Thomas in verse 5. Yes, you do, says Jesus in verse 6. I am the way and the truth and the life. In other words, the way is already open now through me to that life that human beings were made for.

human beings were truly made for. And only through Jesus Christ is that way open. Notice verse 6.

Notice the second half of it. Notice that necessary negative. Not only does Jesus say, I am the way, but no one can find the way. No one comes to the Father except through me.

For those who believe, verse 1, not just in God, but you see also in him, in Jesus. Believe also in me, the Father's only Son.

He is the way and he alone. But then you see in verse 8, Philip joins in and he says, show us the Father and then that will convince us. In other words, I don't want to wait until then, in the future, that you're talking about to go to the Father's house.

[15 : 35] I want that to begin now. Show us the Father. And Jesus says to him, well, it can begin now because the Father is already made manifest in me.

That's what he's saying in verses 9 to 11, very plainly, isn't it, to Philip. God, our Heavenly Father, he says, is made known through the words and the works of Jesus in his earthly ministry.

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Whoever has seen Jesus and heard Jesus speaking the Father's words have heard the words of the Father, verse 10.

I am in the Father and the Father is in me. The words I say to you are the Father's words. The works I do are his works. So believe these words and believe these works because that is how God the Father makes himself known to you, to human beings.

And then Jesus says an even more astounding thing. Look at verses 12 to 14. He says that the Father is going to go on revealing himself and glorifying himself in the Son, in Jesus, through the words and the works of his followers after Jesus returns to the Father in glory.

[16 : 49] Verse 12, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do and greater works because I'm going to the Father. Jesus from heaven will do the Father's work on earth still through his people in answer to their prayers.

Verse 13, whatever you ask in my name, I will do that the Father may be glorified in the Son and go on being glorified in Jesus even after Jesus is no longer physically and bodily on this earth but has returned to glory.

glory. And the question you see then is how? How will all Jesus' followers, and notice verse 12, it's whoever believes in me, how will all Jesus' followers share in this extraordinary privilege of making the Father, God Almighty, the Father, known through Jesus in the world when Jesus is no longer on the earth?

How will they share the amazing privilege of doing this revelatory work of God the Father here on earth?

After all, if the closest disciples, the best disciples of Jesus couldn't be trusted to keep with them even for a few more hours, if even his best and closest deserted them and ran away, what on earth hope have ordinary Christians, whoever believes, what hope have they got of fulfilling an extraordinary task like that?

[18 : 24] Well, the answer Jesus gives in verses 15 to 27 here, and it lies in the two great gifts that he gives to his people, to his church, because of his resurrection and ascension, because he is going to the Father.

And because of this, as verse 27 reaffirms, you see, we don't need to be troubled or fearful. Indeed, because of this, as verse 28 says, we should rejoice because Jesus has ascended to the Father and to the great glory that he had before the world began.

Because of what? Well, because of the gift of the Spirit and the gift of the Scriptures. Because of the gift of the Spirit and his ministry to all believers directly in their hearts, and the gift of the Scriptures to all believers indirectly through Christ's apostles.

And I want to think about each of these in turn. Verses 15 to 21 focus on the gift of the Spirit to all believers, who brings the Father and the Son to make their home with them here on earth.

the Holy Spirit will come to everyone who loves Jesus and manifest the presence of Christ to them. That is, he will give them undeniable assurance that he is present with them forever.

[19 : 52] Look at verse 15. If you love me, you will keep my commandments and I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him.

You know him for he dwells with you and will be in you. Jesus calls the Spirit another helper and advocate to convey the Father's cause on earth just as Jesus himself had done in the flesh.

and he will manifest the presence of God on earth with his people just as Jesus has done. And that's why they needn't fear.

They're not going to be left alone. He will be with them through his Holy Spirit. Now those disciples, of course, were going to have a unique privilege. That's what verses 18 to 20 are talking about.

Jesus would come to them again personally in his risen body. what the world would not see, those chosen few did see. Verse 19. And on that day we know, don't we?

[21 : 07] Because we read on in the gospel, their sorrow did turn to joy. And they began to grasp the wonderful truth that he really was alive, that he really was one with the Father, the ever living one. But notice verse 21.

It's not just the privilege of that immediate circle of disciples that he's talking about there. it's whoever has his commandments and whoever loves Jesus, who will be loved by Jesus and his Father in sending the Spirit to manifest Christ's presence to them, to assure them of his love.

And he's looking ahead, of course, isn't he, to the day of Pentecost, when the coming of the Spirit will indeed touch all disciples on earth, assuring them that they are possessed by Jesus because they're possessed by the same Spirit that he himself was filled with.

And Jesus says that to them, they know him already, he says in verse 17, because he is the Holy Spirit who dwells with them in the person of Jesus. It's he, it's the same Spirit who will come to be in them and in whoever, whoever loves Jesus Christ.

in them to assure them of Jesus loving presence with them, never to leave them forever. And friends, that is the chief ministry of the Holy Spirit.

[22 : 36] He comes to tell us that Jesus is with us. He comes to tell us that Jesus loves us. He comes to tell us we are loved by our Heavenly Father. And he does that to everyone, says Jesus, who loves the Lord Jesus Christ.

There can be no greater ministry on this earth than that. No greater ministry. To be the one who manifests, who convinces the world of reality, of the love of Christ, the saving love of our Savior forever and ever.

It's said that the great 20th century theologian Carl Barth was once asked to articulate briefly the greatest theological truth of all. And he said, oh, that's very easy.

Jesus loves me. This I know, for the Bible tells me so. And that is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to tell us that that is true of us.

God's great gift to us assures us that he loves us because Jesus has gone to the Father. That is because he has died for us.

[23 : 51] He has been raised for us. He has ascended for us and goes to prepare a place for us. There is no greater gift that anyone on this earth can ever possess than to know that that is true for you.

And it is the gift that Jesus says he gives, verse 21, unto whoever loves me. Whoever loves me. Do you notice that in verse 1 he talked about believing in him, trusting in him.

And now he makes clear, doesn't he, what believing in Jesus really means. It means loving him, loving Jesus. That's what real belief is at its very heart.

And that's a wonderful thing because it means that you can even be very wrong about a lot of things. You're going to be wrong about theology, wrong about doctrine, wrong about all kinds of things, but love Jesus and you do truly belong to him.

But you can't belong to him without loving Jesus, no matter how right you are about all sorts of things. Without love to Jesus, you don't belong to him. But what is loving Jesus?

[25 : 08] Well, again, notice Jesus makes that very clear. You see how verses 15 and 21 bracket this section that comes before Jude's question.

Loving Jesus isn't something sentimental, do you see? It's not just an emotional feeling. Jesus is talking here about love as a volitional surrender.

If you love me, verse 15, you will keep my commandments. And verse 21, whoever keeps my commandments, he it is who loves me. Believing in Jesus means loving Jesus and loving Jesus means obeying Jesus.

It means living gladly under his rule, under his direction. That's why Peter says in preaching in Acts chapter 5 that God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey him.

Because those are the ones who love him. That's how you show you love Jesus. And that's so important to remember and to realize. Biblical faith is never a leap into the dark.

[26 : 15] It's never anything to do with trying to think things are true that aren't really true. Not at all. Belief in the Bible is simply submitting to the truth of God that is revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It's responding truly to the revelation of God which is the greatest truth in the whole world. It's stopping resisting.

It's stopping rebelling against this truth and against God's rightful rule over your life. It's stopping asserting your own personal autonomy over your own life.

That's what believing means. It's a joyful surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ in loving obedience. That's what it means to believe, to trust.

And that's why the apostles often talk about the obedience of faith and the disobedience of unbelief. Two ways of saying the same thing. Because faith, obedience to God, is not an optional luxury.

[27 : 13] It's a duty. And unbelief and disobedience is culpable. Ignorance, you see, is no defense. Imagine when you go home this evening, you're so desperate to get back for the last few rays of the Scottish summer before you miss them.

And so you're belting down the motorway at the police car. And the traffic police comes up to you and says, I'm sorry, Mr.

Philip, you were doing 100 miles an hour. And I'll say to him, I just don't believe I was doing that officer at all. I don't believe it. And he'll say, well, you see, sir, you have a speedometer in your car, and your speedometer was revealing the truth to you.

But either you ignored that truth, or you disbelieved it, but either way, we call it disobeying the speed limit, and you're booked. Well, you see, just so with Jesus, that is what he is saying here.

Look at verse 23. If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. In verse 24, whoever does not love me, does not keep my word.

[28 : 21] In other words, he rejects my authority. It's very simple. But love him, keep his word, his commandments, after he has ascended and gone to the Father in glory.

How can anyone therefore be loved by Jesus, by his Father, and receive that wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit to assure them of that love, to experience it even now, to experience already the beginning of what it means to be at home with the Father.

And notice verse 23, that's what Jesus says, the life that we're really made for life eternal in the Father's home, that is what begins now, here on earth, through the Holy Spirit's ministry. The life giver comes to dwell in you, even now, if you love Jesus.

It begins. Those who keep his word begin that life. But how do we have Jesus' words? How do we keep his words, obey his commandments?

Well, the answer is, you see, because the spirit is, as verse 17 here tells us, he is the spirit of truth. And he brings Jesus' words of truth to us today through the gift of the Holy Scriptures, which is, again, for all who believe, through his apostles.

[29 : 42] Through his apostles. And it is their unique and authoritative gospel, which will divide the world, as Jesus says, into those who love him and those who don't.

do you see that stark contrast? Look at verses 23 and 24 in the answer to Jude's question. Love and not loving, faith and unbelief, life and death.

Do you see? And the dividing sword is what? It's the word of Christ, which is the very living word of God, the word of the Father who sent me.

And God's word is always a double-edged sword. It's a sword that divides. That's how Hebrews chapter 4 puts it. Jesus' own words always divided.

Jesus was not, as the hymn says, he was not really gentle Jesus, meek and mild. In reality, Jesus Christ was the greatest and most divisive figure in the whole of human history.

[30 : 52] And still is. And that divisiveness will continue after Jesus ascends to the Father and his words live on and do their work through the words of the apostles, which are given to them uniquely by the Holy Spirit.

Look at verses 25 and 26. These things I've spoken to you while I am still with you, but the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

The Spirit will teach them all things, teaching them the full meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection and ascension, his whole life and ministry, bringing to remembrance everything that he has taught them already, but now at last they will understand in the light of his glorious resurrection.

salvation. Note well who he is speaking to and who he is not speaking to. He is speaking specifically to these chosen apostles. Not all who believe will be taught directly like this, certainly not us.

The Holy Spirit of God cannot bring to our remembrance words that Jesus spoke to us when he was on earth, can they? We were not witnesses of Jesus' earthly ministry.

[32 : 11] We mustn't apply these words to us as though they were written somehow directly to us today. That's a very common thing for Christians to do today. It's a great mistake. It's the same thing in chapter 16.

If you look over to chapter 16 verse 13, you'll see again, and these words are not referring to all who believe, but again directly and specifically to the apostles.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine, therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

He's speaking directly to these apostles. The Holy Spirit will not lead us, you and me, individually today into all truth directly.

[33 : 12] Very often today you hear that claimed in the church and very often when it is claimed, it's used when people want to lead the church right away from the scriptures into something that is the polar opposite of everything that Christ and his apostles taught about all kinds of things.

No. Jesus says very clearly that the Spirit will lead his chosen apostles into complete understanding of his words so that they through their preaching and teaching and also through their writings in the New Testament so that they will bring his authoritative words to others after he has ascended to the Father.

Look again at one more place in chapter 15 verse 26 and 27 and he's saying there you see the Holy Spirit will bear witness about me that is directly into people's hearts and that will happen as the apostles as you bear witness about me because you have been with me from the beginning the mark of an apostle the witnesses of the resurrection.

You see that's what Jesus is preparing his followers for here before he dies for the whole age of mission following his ascension and after the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

So come back to chapter 14 and look at verse 25. See what he says. I'm telling you all of this while I'm still with you. So you won't fear my departure for glory.

[34 : 44] So you won't be afraid. Verse 27. Indeed verse 28 so you will have joy and real peace when you understand these things. and whoever believes in me and comes to love me and obey my voice through your ministry in my gospel in the future they too will receive this wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit to bring them a manifestation of my presence with them.

And so you go into all the world. That was the great commission. You go and make disciples of all nations teaching them to do what? To obey everything I've taught you applying this.

And lo I'm with you always. And the implication is I will also be with whoever receives my commands through you through your gospel. Whoever buys them to me in loving obedience and loving me.

I and the Father will manifest myself to them and make our home with them. And that's what you see as you read through the unfolding story of the book of Acts. People receiving the words of Christ through the apostles and receiving the joy of knowing Jesus personally through the life-giving spirit as he comes upon all those who hear the word.

Read Acts and you'll see. So after Jesus goes to glory, he continues to manifest the Father in the world through the apostles and their gospel.

[36 : 14] But what about when the apostles are no more and go to glory and join Jesus? Well, we don't have time this evening, but if you read later the apostoral epistles, 2 Timothy, if you read 2 Peter in particular, where Peter knows that he is soon going to die, he's soon going to be taken from him, that is what his letter is all about.

He says to him, fear not, in chapter 1 of 2 Peter, he says God's given you everything you need for life and godliness. Where? Through these great and precious promises in the gospel of the spirit given scriptures.

He says you've got the eyewitness testimony of the apostles. That's our New Testament. He says you've got the whole words of the prophets, the Old Testament made more sure.

You've got the Old Testament. Remember, he says in 2 Peter 3 verse 2, he says you have the commandment of our Lord and Savior. How?

Through your apostles. There are words in your Bibles. And that's what we have, isn't it? Here, in the great gift of the Holy Spirit, the scriptures, the words of the Son, the words of the Father himself, the words of life revealed uniquely to Christ's apostles, but preserved in the biblical gospel for us and for whoever believes, whoever believes, whoever comes to love Jesus through our testimony, through the same gospel which is now entrusted to us to preserve and to proclaim.

[37 : 54] It's easy, isn't it, for us to have troubled hearts these days, just like the apostles did then. It's easy for us to be afraid because we look around at our world, we look at our society, and we seem to be in a minority, a growing minority.

We seem to be those who are scorned by so many because of our faith. There's so much disdain for so many of the things that we believe and we take for granted, all sorts of things.

And we might think, ah, wouldn't it be so much better if Jesus was just here? He could tell them. But Jesus says, no, you're wrong to think that, just as his disciples were wrong.

I think you better answer it. And Jesus, you see, says, no, you're wrong because I have gone to the Father, because I'm going to the Father.

I've told you all this in advance. And when I do go to the Father, you will know not to be sad, but to rejoice because you're going to say even greater things.

[39 : 03] greater works than I've done through the great gifts of my ascension that I send upon the church. Look back at verses 11 and 12 because that is what Jesus says.

Whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do and greater works of these because I'm going to the Father. What could that mean?

Well, it's just what we're talking about, making the Father known. Back in John chapter 5, Jesus explicitly talks about these greater works and refers to the Son giving life to all those that he will.

Whoever hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life. And Jesus said, an hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live, will have eternal life through that word.

There is no greater work possible on this earth than that, is there? What could it possibly be? Imparting eternal life to people who are condemned to eternal death for their sin.

[40 : 13] But that's what Jesus says his followers, his people are going to see again and again and again all over the world in vastly greater numbers than ever were seen during Jesus' own ministry on this earth.

eternal life begun now for multitudes of people. Whoever has Jesus' commands, whoever obeys and loves him.

Greater works than in the limited time and the limited geography of Jesus' earthly ministry. Far greater. Far greater are the works of his heavenly ministry through his spirit coming upon the church manifesting his reign in this world through the great ascension gifts.

The gift of the spirit's ministry directly in the hearts of all believers, all who respond and love Jesus through the proclamation of the word of life-giving power in the gift of the spirit in the scriptures.

The scriptures that come to us through the apostles. And you see, if we really understand that, we grasp the sheer scale of it, then we won't be troubled.

[41 : 29] We won't be afraid in this world. We'll rejoice. Because we know that we will see what verse 23 describes. We will see people into whose lives the father and the son have come to make their home through the gift of the spirit that he gives to everyone who bows the knee and obeys Jesus.

And we will see that in response to the word of Jesus, in response to his command through the apostolic gospel, as we, ordinary believers, as we hold out that word of life, as we hold out the Bible and proclaim its message to the people of this city, to the people of this nation, to people that we love, to our friends, our families, our neighbors, our workmates.

That is why Jesus gave the apostles this word. That's why they persevered. And that's why they kept on speaking that word.

That's why they preserved that word in the scriptures for us. John tells us that very explicitly, doesn't he, right at the end of his gospel. These things are written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

That's what the scriptures are for. And yes, we will see division. Jesus is very plain here in verse 24. Not all will love him. Some will reject his words.

[42 : 57] But again, he tells us that in advance so we won't lose heart. But look at verse 23 again. Whoever does receive his command, whoever receives his summons to bow the knee in loving obedience, Jesus says, I will love him.

I will manifest myself to him. Now verse 23, my father will love him and we will come and make our home with him.

That is the supreme gift of the Holy Spirit of God. The inconsolable longing that is within every single human heart, it tells us that yes, we are made for something more, something much, much more.

Much more than this world. We belong in the father's house, the house of life. And Jesus says, you know the way. You know it now.

The way is open. We know if we're Christians in this church tonight, we know the way to the father's house of eternal life.

[44 : 05] He's given us the gift of the scriptures so that through sharing that message, many, many will receive the gift of the spirit, which is eternal life.

So thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift. And may he make us sharers of that gift through sharing this gospel until he comes.

Let's pray. Father, grant your Holy Spirit in our hearts to rule us today.

That we should not grieve him away, not quench your spirit, but allow him to work in us his sovereign way. We ask that you would fill us with your holy fullness.

and through us. Do your perfect will on this earth, glorifying your name.

[45 : 08] And bringing many. To eternal life. And we ask it for the glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.