

Bible Study Guide: Week of 5-30-2022

1. Read through the passage below
2. Read my notes and commentary
3. Read the questions at the end and ponder or discuss with others

Pastor Andrew

John 14:8-17, 25-27

⁸Philip said to [Jesus], “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” ⁹Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰Do 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; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.

¹²Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

¹⁵“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. ¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

²⁵“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. ²⁶But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

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This passage takes place during Jesus’ farewell discourse on his last night with his disciples. Philip has come up in a few places earlier in the gospel. In John 1 Philip was the third disciple Jesus called to follow him. He is the one who invited his friend Nathanael to “come and see” Jesus. In chapter 6, Philip questions Jesus: “Where are we to buy bread to feed all of these people?” before Jesus feeds the 5,000. Philip exclaims that “six months’ wages wouldn’t buy enough for each person to get even a little bit of bread.” And in John 12, Philip is the disciple who brings news to Jesus that some Greeks (non-Jews) wish to see Jesus. This prompts Jesus to announce that “his hour has come to be glorified.” Here, Philip continues that theme of “seeing” that began in chapter 1 with his invitation to Nathanael to “come and see” and continued in chapter 12 when some Greeks longed to see Jesus. Here, Philip asks Jesus to let them see the Father.

Jesus’ answer to Philip’s request is to essentially say, “What do you think I’ve been doing for the last 13 chapters? What do you think the last three years have been about?” Jesus references the “works” of the Father, referring to the signs he has performed that point to his unity with the Father.

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Jesus promises that those who believe in him will do greater works than the ones Jesus has done. Here, greater could mean several different things. We tend to assume Jesus means that the works the disciples do will be greater in magnitude—that is, bigger miracles or more impressive signs. But Jesus could also be speaking of the longevity or the widespread nature of the works the disciples will do in Jesus' name. Of course, in the book of Acts the disciples indeed continued the miraculous healing work Jesus began, but also consider how far and wide they spread the message of Jesus. Rather than being confined to Judea and Galilee, the message of Jesus spread throughout the known world. The works the first disciples did (and the works we do today as modern disciples) indeed can have a reach far greater than Jesus' geographically and temporally limited ministry managed. Jesus' words that he will do "whatever you ask in my name" are often taken out of context. He is not saying he will do anything anyone asks of him, but rather is encouraging the disciples to ask *in his name*, meaning in accordance with his will and for the purpose of spreading the gospel.

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The life Jesus has in mind for the disciples to live after his death, resurrection, and return to the Father is a life marked by obedience to Jesus' commandments (particularly his commandment to love one another as he has loved them), receiving and being led and instructed by the Holy Spirit, and abiding with God and one another forever.

Discussion/Reflection Questions:

- 1. Why do you think Philip asks Jesus to show them the Father? Do you think Philip likely found Jesus' answer satisfactory?**
- 2. What do you think Jesus means by "greater works than these?" Do you think it is possible for us to do greater works than Jesus himself did?**
- 3. How does the role of the Holy Spirit in this passage differ from the role of the Spirit in Acts 2? How is the role of the Spirit the same here as it is there?**