

## **"KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK" - CONTINUING THE WORK OF JESUS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Story - Jesus learned to do what he saw Joseph doing in the carpenter's shop - he became a carpenter himself (Mark 6:3).

What has this to do with discipleship? Linked to an amazing passage in the NT - John 14:12-14 (link will become clear later!!)

### **READ JOHN 14:12**

"Amen, amen ..." = a very important revelation (this phrase 25 times in John's gospel - homework : find them all!) - e.g. 3:3, 3:5, 5:19, 5:21 - each time an important revelation of the heart and mind of God

- Amen = Hebrew, sure, trustworthy, certain, to be relied on, firm support
- Amen, amen = strong emphasis = "This is really important"

"... do the works I do, and greater..."

- Replication
- Continuation
- Extension

An essential feature of discipleship (apprenticeship) = learning from the master, doing what he does, picking up the tools of the trade, carrying on his work  
[Refer to "Following the instructions" drama]

### **WHAT DID JESUS DO?**

If we are to "do the works he did", we need to know what they were.

For example, see Mark 1 :

- 14 preaching the gospel
- 17 calling people to join him
- 21 teaching in the synagogue
- 25 cast out evil spirits
- 31 healed sickness
- 35 prayed
- 41 moved with pity he touched him

A hectic whirlwind of actions ("immediately") - being with Jesus was not boring!

Was it a random chaotic series of events?

- No - he only did what he saw/heard his Father do (John 5:19, 30, 12:49-50, 14:10)
- Learned this in Joseph's shop, then with his real Father (Luke 2:49)
  - [link this to opening story]

For us, doing what he did = daily constant obedience to the Father

- Not my will but yours
- "Yes Lord"
- being Jesus to my world ("Christian" = little Christ)

"... and greater"???

Three different Greek words for "greater" - ask people to guess which is used :

- Greek *meizon* = same but broader scope, extension, greater degree
  - = irregular comparative of *megas* - Jesus was mega, we are more mega!)
- Not *pleion* = greater in quantity or quality
- Not *perissoteros* = excessive, OTT

Jesus expects us to do **more of the same**

- He was limited to a 3-year ministry in 1<sup>st</sup> Century Palestine
- We have global opportunity (and responsibility)

In order to "do the works that he did", we need to put ourselves in his situation - us doing what he did.

But in order to be relevant to life today, we need to put Jesus in our situations - him doing what we do.

## **DOING HIS WORKS TODAY**

"WWJD?" = Major youth movement, especially in US.

Jesus in daily life : the office, home, school, shops, pub, with friends ...

- Incarnation and involvement

[use your imagination, sanctified by the Holy Spirit! = meditation]

Being a prophetic community = expressing the heart, character, will and actions of God where we live

## YES, BUT HOW?

A daunting prospect!! Jesus was amazing - "Follow that!"

Jesus gives two conditions and a method in John 14:12-14, to help us understand how we can meet this challenge to do what he did and greater.

CONDITION 1 (verse 12) : "the one who believes in me ..."

- Not just the disciples then, but also the disciples now - i.e. us!
- Greek *pisteuo* = active faith, confidently trusting, being committed
- Question : Do we *really* believe in Jesus?
- This kind of faith in action is essential if we are to do his works today

CONDITION 2 (verse 12) : "... because I go to the Father"

- The importance of the **ascension** (question : Where is Jesus now?)
  - Seated at God's right hand - authority, intercession, our representative (apostle and high priest, Hebrews 1:1-4, 3:1)
  - If Jesus was not ascended and seated at God's right hand, we'd never be able to do his works today - we are dependent on his position
  - Acts 1:1-2 "... Jesus **began** ... until he was taken up..." - now it's up to us (no Plan B!)

METHOD (verses 13-14) : "Ask in my name"

- The name represents the person and their character
  - See inside cover of passport!
  - Shopping on account!
- We have the authority of Jesus, to ask anything in his name - we will have it!
- This is essential if we are to do his works today - the power of answered prayer
- Note the condition "in my name" - i.e. in line with his character and will - not a blank cheque!
- Example - Peter & John in Acts 3:1-10 - "I have nothing, but in the name of Jesus get up and walk." We too have nothing except what is ours through the name of Jesus - his authority and character.

## **CONCLUSION**

We need to : Believe in Jesus - act only out of faith  
Recognise the importance of his ascension - rely on his position  
Ask in his name - use his authority to claim what he wants us to have

Then (and only then) will we be able to do his works - and greater - if we listen to the Father and respond in faith, with the authority of the ascended Jesus.

There is no room for apathy or BAU. We need to let the challenge of John 14:12 shake us into radical discipleship = regular obedience (My motto John 2:5 "Do whatever he tells you").

No-one else can do the works of Jesus in your situation - that's why you are there (Esther). We each have unique opportunities = unique responsibility.

Jesus made an amazing difference to the lives of those he met.  
We are called and challenged to continue and complete his work.

Let's do it!

## **HOMEWORK**

Make "WWJD?" a habit!

Next week be prepared to share what Jesus would have done in your situations - did you do it, and if so what happened?!