

ADVANCE THE GOSPEL

The Gospel Is A Call To Be Missionaries

THE PASSAGE

Matthew 28:18-20; John 20:21

1) Advance the Gospel

- Matthew 28:18-20; John 20:21; Matthew 16:18

2) Missional

- Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 8:1-4

3) A Royal Priesthood

- 1 Peter 2:9-11; Ephesians 4:11-13

4) Put Down the Nachos

- Acts 1:8
- What's holding you back?

FURTHER STUDY THIS WEEK

The Church is Not an Audience; it's an Army (Adapted from J.D. Greear)

In John 14:12, Jesus made an astounding statement to his disciples: “Truly, truly I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”

On one level, that seems like an absolutely absurd statement. We would do *greater* works than Jesus? How could that ever be? He raised the dead. How do you do “greater” than that? And would we have closer communion with the Father—or understand Him more, or have more anointing on us—when we preached? Would we receive answers to prayer like He did?

I don't think there's anyone who could say with a straight face that they have “greater” power in their ministry than Jesus did. Thus, “greater” could not mean “greater” in quality, but greater had to mean in terms of *quantity*. Now that Jesus was ascending back to Heaven, the Spirit of God (Who was the source, Luke notes, of even Jesus' power on earth) would not be limited to one person (Jesus) or even a group of leaders (the disciples); He would be within every believer. Every believer would now be ministering in the power of the Spirit, and that would produce a greater net effect than even if Jesus had Himself stayed here to minister. Wow.

Unfortunately, much of the way that we program our churches is still as if the Spirit of God resides on a few primary leaders. Most churches are merely an audience gathered around one anointed leader, basking in his oratorical greatness, listening to his prophetic insight. Now, I certainly want to give due weight to God's special gifting in the Church—He has placed specially-called apostles, teachers, prophets, pastors, etc. That said, the whole point of John 14:12 is not that the Spirit of God would reside only, or even primarily, on a handful of leaders, but that He would reside in *every* believer.

Churches that get that focus on developing, empowering, and releasing their members, realizing that, by a LONG SHOT, the greatest ministry power happens not in the church through a few pastors, but outside the church in the community through the members. The church should not be an audience gathered around a leader, but a ‘leadership factory.’

Churches that take Jesus' words in John 14:12 seriously should set themselves up so that their primary focus is equipping and sending. As I've often pointed out to our church, of the 40 miracles in Acts, 39 of them happened outside of the church! Not to press this too far, but only 1/40 of the power of God should be manifesting itself through me in the church.

The weekend is not the point; the week is the point. Real ministry happens throughout the week. While we certainly value the weekend, the New Testament's focus is clearly on the week (Eph 4:11-13).

Ironically, I think some churches' success in building a crowd keeps them blind to how poorly they are leading their people to really become the body of Christ in the world. It's like I've heard Darrin Patrick recently say, “Attractional success can blind you to your lack of incarnational engagement.”

So how do you see yourself? As a warm body in a seat, or a Spirit-empowered missionary sent out by Jesus Himself, to the city of Regina, to bring the Good News of Jesus who are in desperate need of Him? Talk it out with those you are in community with. Be honest: What does the pattern of your life reveal?