



greater things

SPIRIT-LED INNOVATION

Worship Resource Week 1

Sermon Title: Accept these Truths

Scripture: John 14:8-14 (The Voice)

Philip: 8 Lord, all I am asking is that You show us the Father.

Jesus (to Philip): 9 I have lived with you all this time, and you still don't know who I am? If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father. How can you keep asking to see the Father? 10 Don't you believe Me when I say I abide in the Father and the Father dwells in Me? I'm not making this up as I go along. The Father has given Me these truths that I have been speaking to you, and He empowers all My actions. 11 Accept these truths: I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me. If you have trouble believing based on My words, believe because of the things I have done. 12 I tell you the truth: whoever believes in Me will be able to do what I have done, but they will do even greater things, because I will return to be with the Father. 13 Whatever you ask for in My name, I will do it so that the Father will get glory from the Son. 14 Let Me say it again: if you ask for anything in My name, I will do it.

Worship Promo:

Jesus believed in the work of his disciples because he believed so fully in God. Over and over, he begs crowds, religious authorities, and even his disciples to trust his teachings about God, to "Accept these truths..." This week in worship, we will look to Jesus' teachings about himself, God, and the Spirit so that we might understand why Jesus believed his disciples could do greater things.

Desired Outcome:

Community members will learn about Jesus' understanding of himself, God, and the Spirit as they seek to live into the radical expectation that we will do "Greater Things."

Reflection Question:

- Who in your life has truly believed in your potential for good?

Sermon-Building Key Points (including any references for exegesis)

- It's easy to read this passage and assume that Jesus' disciples were really extraordinary people for Jesus to tell them they would do "greater things" than him.
- But this passage is really about how extraordinary Jesus believes God is. It's Jesus' theology (or beliefs about God) in miniature.
- Jesus fully believes that God (the Father or Creator) "dwells" in him (John 14.10) and has enabled him to do incredible works.

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- Throughout the Gospel of John, the “indwelling” of God in Jesus is a way of describing the close relationship between God and Jesus. (See The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary, Volume IX Luke and John, pp. 735 - 750.)
- The central claim of John’s Gospel is that God has become available to humanity through this incarnation in the person of Jesus. In other words, humanity has actually “met” God in the person of Jesus.
- But, with Jesus’ death imminent, Jesus longs for his disciples to understand that this connection with God will not disappear in Jesus’ absence. The incarnation is not a one and done event.
- Elaine E. Robinson writes of Jesus as Godbearer—a human who “bears the fullness of God within himself,” but who also “bears God to others.” (See: *Godbearing: Evangelism Reconceived* by Elaine E. Robinson, Pilgrim Press, 2006.)
- Jesus encourages Peter to “accept these truths:” that Peter has already met God through Jesus. And further, that any disciple who believes that they have met God through Jesus can bear God to others.
- Belief in God’s incarnation in Jesus not only allows the disciples to meet God, but also allows the disciples to introduce God to others through the disciples’ human ministry.
- Jesus’ expectation that the disciples would do “greater things” does not simply refer to the miraculous signs the disciples have seen, but the fact that Jesus expects the disciples to bear God to people, even after Jesus’ death.
- And Jesus’ expectation extends to us, disciples of today: that we will continue to introduce God to others through our belief in God’s dwelling in Jesus and in our actions that testify to this belief.
- The very fact that we gather as Christians testifies that Jesus’ expectations have been lived out over many generations.
- Each of us has encountered the story of Jesus through someone whose faith or actions or both have inspired us to learn more.
- The story of a Middle Eastern man who lived and died over 2000 years ago continues to lead people to relationship with God.
- This is not because those first disciples were extraordinary. It’s not because we are extraordinary. It’s because of the extraordinary way God worked through Jesus.

Week 1 Daily Prayer

God of Greater Things, help me to believe in your ability to show up in my life. Through Jesus, I believe that you meet us where we are: as humans seeking to live lives of wholeness. Guide me as I seek to meet you today and as I seek to allow others to meet you through me, too. Amen.

Small Group Discussion Starters

- Who introduced you to God in a way that sparked your sense of belief?
- What about them inspired you? Their faith? Their actions? The relationship you had with them?
- Are there those in your life, especially of generations younger than yours, that you believe in to do “greater things” than you? How have you spoken that expectation and belief into their lives?

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Bibliography / References / Further Reading

- “Godbearing: Evangelism Reconceived,” by Elaine A. Robinson. Published by The Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, Ohio, 2006. ISBN 978-0-8298-1708-9
- O’Day, Gail R., “John,” commentary in The New Interpreter’s Bible, Volume IX: Luke & John; Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1995.

Contemporary Music Recommendations

- God of This City*
- Great Are You Lord
- Great is Thy Faithfulness
- How Great Is Your Love
- Matt Brock “Greater Things”
- See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NueMKnU8qa0>

**Consider using this as a refrain or touchstone song throughout the series.*

Traditional Music Recommendations

- UMH #468 – “Dear Jesus, in Whose Life I See”*
- UMH #164 – “Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life”
- UMH #140 – “Great is Thy Faithfulness”
- UMH #456 – “Holy Spirit, Truth Divine”

**Consider using this short, simple hymn as a refrain throughout the series.*

Kids Connection Thought Starter

- Perhaps the most important way that children learn about Jesus’ message of God’s love is through the relationships they have with caring adults.
- Ask the children to name someone who “believes in them:” someone who praises them and encourages their kindness, love, and honesty.
- Ask how it feels to know someone believes in them.
- Remind them that God believes in them, too. Even when they’re not perfect, God always believes in their ability to come back to love.

Liturgical Elements

- Prayer of Confession: [Prayer of Confession](#) by Stephen Fearing via re: Worship
- Table Prayer (Following Communion): [Table Prayer](#) by Church of Whales via re: Worship