

I Go Unto the Father!

by Andrew Murray

Christ's ascension gives power to the disciples to do greater works than He did, and prayer is the channel through which this power is received.

Scripture: John 14:12

Topics: "Prayer", "Empowerment through Faith"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the significance of Jesus' ascension to the Father, which empowers believers to perform greater works through prayer in His name. He explains that the disciples, now His friends and messengers, are called to continue His work on earth, relying on the power received from the Father. Murray highlights that effective prayer is essential for effective work, and that true believers must align their requests with the mission of Christ. He encourages believers to fully commit to Jesus' work, assuring them that their prayers will be answered as they seek to glorify Him. Ultimately, Murray calls for a life of faith and prayer, urging believers to trust in the promises of Christ.

Transcript

'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.'--John xiv. 12, 13.

AS the Saviour opened His public ministry with His disciples by the Sermon on the Mount, so He closes it by the Parting Address preserved to us by John. In both He speaks more than once of prayer. But with a difference. In the Sermon on the Mount it is as to disciples who have only just entered His school, who scarcely know that God is their Father, and whose prayer chiefly has reference to their personal needs. In His closing address He speaks to disciples whose training time is now come to an end, and who are ready as His messengers to take His place and His work. In the former the chief lesson is: Be childlike, pray believingly, and trust the Father that He will give you all good gifts. Here He points to something higher: They are now His friends to whom He has made known all that He has heard of the Father; His messengers, who have entered into His plans, and into whose hands the care of His work and kingdom on earth is to be entrusted. They are now to go out and do His works, and in the power of His approaching exaltation, even greater works: prayer is now to be the channel through which that power is to be received for their work. With Christ's ascension to the Father a new epoch commences for their working and praying both.

See how clearly this connection comes out in our text. As His body here on earth, as those who are one with Him in heaven, they are now to do greater works than He had done; their success and their victories are to be greater than His. He mentions two reasons for this. The one, because He was to go to the Father, to receive all power; the other, because they might now ask and expect all in His Name. 'Because I go to the Father, and--notice this and--and, whatsoever ye shall ask, I will do.' His going to the Father would thus bring the double blessing: they would ask and receive all in His Name, and as a consequence, would do the greater works. This first mention of prayer in our Saviour's parting words thus teaches us two most important lessons. He that would do the works of Jesus must pray in His Name. He that would pray in His Name must work in His Name.

He who would work must pray: it is in prayer that the power for work is obtained. He that in faith would do the works that Jesus did, must pray in His Name. As long as Jesus was here on earth, He Himself did the greatest works: devils the disciples could not cast out, fled at His word. When He went to the Father, He was no longer here in the body to work directly. The disciples were now His body: all His work from the throne in heaven here on earth must and could be done through them. One might have thought that now He was leaving the scene Himself, and could only work through commissioners, the works might be fewer and weaker. He assures us of the contrary: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and he shall do greater works.' His approaching death was to be such a real breaking down and making an end of the power of sin; with the resurrection the powers of the Eternal Life were so truly to take possession of the human body and to obtain supremacy over human life; with His ascension He was to receive the power to communicate the Holy Spirit so fully to His own; the union, the oneness between Himself on the throne and them on earth, was to be so intensely and divinely perfect, that He meant it as the literal truth: 'Greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father.' And the issue proved how true it was. While Jesus, during three years of personal labour on earth, gathered little more than five hundred disciples, and the most of them so feeble that they were but little credit to His cause, it was given to men like Peter and Paul manifestly to do greater things than He had done. From the throne He could do through them what He Himself in His humiliation could not yet do.

But there is one condition: 'He that believeth on me, he shall do greater works, because I go to the Father; and whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.' His going to the Father would give Him a new power to hear prayer. For the doing of the greater works, two things were needed: His going to the Father to receive all power, our prayer in His Name to receive all power from Him again. As He asks the Father, He receives and bestows on us the power of the new dispensation for the greater works; as we believe, and ask in His Name, the power comes and takes possession of us to do the greater works.

Alas! how much working there is in the work of God, in which there is little or nothing to be seen of the power to do anything like Christ's works, not to speak of greater works. There can be but one reason: the believing on Him, the believing prayer in His Name, this is so much wanting. O that every labourer and leader in church, or school, in the work of home philanthropy or foreign missions might learn the lesson: Prayer in the Name of Jesus is the way to share in the mighty power which Jesus has received of the Father for His people, and it is in this power alone that he that believeth can do the greater works. To every complaint as to weakness or unfitness, as to difficulties or want of success, Jesus gives this one answer: 'He that believeth on me shall do greater works, because I go to the Father, and whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.' We must understand that the first and chief thing for everyone who would do the work of Jesus, is to believe, and so to get linked to Him, the Almighty One, and then to pray the prayer of faith in His Name. Without this our work is but human and carnal; it may have some use in

restraining sin, or preparing the way for blessing, but the real power is wanting. Effectual working needs first effectual prayer.

And now the second lesson: He who would pray must work. It is for power to work that prayer has such great promises: it is in working that the power for the effectual prayer of faith will be gained. In these parting words of our blessed Lord we find that He no less than six times (John xiv. 13, 14, xv. 7, 16, xvi. 23, 24) repeats those unlimited prayer-promises which have so often awakened our anxious questionings as to their real meaning: 'whatsoever,' 'anything,' 'what ye will,' 'ask and ye shall receive.' How many a believer has read these over with joy and hope, and in deep earnestness of soul has sought to plead them for his own need. And he has come out disappointed. The simple reason was this: he had rent away the promise from its surrounding. The Lord gave the wonderful promise of the free use of His Name with the Father in connection with the doing of His works. It is the disciple who gives himself wholly to live for Jesus' work and kingdom, for His will and honour, to whom the power will come to appropriate the promise. He that would fain grasp the promise when he wants something very special for himself, will be disappointed, because he would make Jesus the servant of his own comfort. But to him who seeks to pray the effectual prayer of faith, because he needs it for the work of the Master, to him it will be given to learn it; because he has made himself the servant of his Lord's interests. Prayer not only teaches and strengthens to work: work teaches and strengthens to pray.

This is in perfect harmony with what holds good both in the natural and the spiritual world. Whosoever hath, to him shall be given; or, He that is faithful in a little, is faithful also in much. Let us with the small measure of grace already received, give ourselves to the Master for His work: work will be to us a real school of prayer. It was when Moses had to take full charge of a rebellious people that he felt the need, but also the courage, to speak boldly to God and to ask great things of Him (Ex. xxxiii. 12, 15, 18). As you give yourself entirely to God for His work, you will feel that nothing less than these great promises are what you need, that nothing less is what you may most confidently expect.

Believer in Jesus! You are called, you are appointed, to do the works of Jesus, and even greater works, because He has gone to the Father to receive the power to do them in and through you.

Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do. Give yourself, and live, to do the works of Christ and you will learn to pray so as to obtain wonderful answers to prayer. Give yourself, and live, to pray and you will learn to do the works He did, and greater works. With disciples full of faith in Himself, and bold in prayer to ask great things, Christ can conquer the world.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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O my Lord! I have this day again heard words from Thee which pass my comprehension. And yet I cannot do aught but in simple childlike faith take and keep them as Thy gift to me too. Thou hast said that in virtue of Thy going to the Father, he that believeth on Thee will do the works which Thou hast done, and greater works. Lord! I worship Thee as the Glorified One, and look for the fulfilment of Thy promise. May my whole life just be one of continued believing in Thee. So purify and sanctify my heart, make it so tenderly susceptible of Thyself and Thy love, that believing on Thee may be the very life it breathes.

And Thou hast said that in virtue of Thy going to the Father, whatsoever we ask, Thou wilt do. From Thy throne of power Thou wouldest make Thy people share the power given Thee, and work through them as

the members of Thy body, in response to their believing prayers in Thy Name. Power in prayer with Thee, and power in work with men, is what Thou has promised Thy people and me too.

Blessed Lord! Forgive us all that we have so little believed Thee and Thy promise, and so little proved Thy faithfulness in fulfilling it. O forgive us that we have so little honoured Thy all-prevailing Name in heaven or upon earth.

Lord! Teach me to pray so that I may prove that Thy Name is indeed all-prevailing with God and men and devils. Yea, teach me so to work and so to pray that Thou canst glorify Thyself in me as the Omnipotent One, and do Thy great work through me too. Amen.

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