

# THE RED LETTER LECTURES

## LEARNING TO PRAY FROM THE WORDS OF JESUS

### Bringing Glory To The Father

- I. **I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. — Jn. 14:12-14**

A. ***I tell you the truth . . .***

1. Lit., "Amen, amen, I am saying to you."
2. Repetition is always used for emphasis. See *Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8*.
3. Amen is a transliteration of the Hebrew word, meaning "surely, truly, so be it, truth."
4. This is one of our Lord's favorite expressions. It is used 78X in the Gospels.

B. ***anyone who has faith in me . . .***

1. Faith is believing with conviction in something not yet seen. See *Heb. 11:1-2*.
2. Faith not in ourselves or another person but faith in Jesus.

C. ***he will do even greater things (works) . .***

1. Can you summarize from the Gospels, the works that Jesus did? See *9:35-36*.

## NOTES

Prayer Quote: "Prayer is the contact of a living soul with God. In prayer, God stoops to kiss man, to bless man, and to aid in everything that God can devise or man can need." — *E.M. Bounds*

Isa. 6:3: And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Rev. 4:8: Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

Heb. 11:1-2: Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.

Mt. 9:35-36: Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

2. Greater in quantity or quality? Miracles?
3. Some scholars teach that the promise of "greater things" or works refers only to spiritual works rather than physical miracles, e.g., "preaching and teaching the gospel to convert sinners."<sup>1</sup>
4. This theological understanding is known as Cessationism. It is difficult to find scriptural support for this position.  
*See margin.*

D. ***I will do whatever you ask that the Son may bring glory to the Father.***

1. Is this promise conditional?
2. What is the major reason Jesus would grant our requests in this context?
3. Our reasons for asking must always be that the Father would receive the glory.
4. That's why we pray in His name, the name of Jesus, that the glory to the Father comes through Him.  
*See Phil. 2:9-11.*

E. ***You may ask me for anything in my name***

1. Jesus repeats the promise for emphasis.

F. Paraphrase of Jn. 14:12-14, from *The Message*:

*The person who trusts me will not only do what I'm doing but even greater things, because I, on my way to the Father, am giving you the same work to do that I've been doing. You can count on it. From now on, whatever you request along the lines of who I am and what I am doing, I'll do it. That's how the Father will be seen for who he is in the Son. I mean it. Whatever you request in this way, I'll do.*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Paul T. Butler, *Bible Study Textbook, The Gospel of John*, p. 250. William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary, John*, p. 273

### Cessationism

In Christian theology, the view that the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as tongues, prophecy and healing, ceased being practiced early on in Church history. — *Dictionary.com*

(1) Full cessationists believe all miracles have ceased today.

(2) Classical cessationists believe that most miracles ceased after the New Testament was written, but that God occasionally works in supernatural ways today.

(3) Consistent cessationists insist that, as miracles ceased after the early apostles, the need for New Testament apostles and prophets also ceased.

(4) Concentric cessationists teach that God still does miracles today, but only in unevangelized areas of the world. — J. Lee Grady, *The Holy Spirit Is Not For Sale*, p. 228

Phil. 2:9-11: Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

II. **If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. — Jn. 15:7-8**

A. ***If you remain . . . my words remain in you . . .***

1. *Meno* (Gk), "to remain, abide, dwell, live."
2. Continuous action. Lit., "If you continue to remain in me and my words continue to remain in you."
3. Remaining or abiding in Christ involves personal communion with Him, e.g., prayer.
4. Remaining in His word includes obedience to His word. *See Jas. 1:22.*
5. To remain in Christ and to allow his words to remain in oneself means a conscious acceptance of the authority of his word and a constant contact with him by prayer.<sup>2</sup>

B. ***ask whatever you wish . . . it will be given to you.***

1. "Ask" is an Imperative Command. *See margin.*
2. God commands us to ask for what we desire.
3. The promise is that when we ask, we will receive. Is this promise conditional?

C. ***my Father's glory . . . bear much fruit***

1. The prayers that are answered are the ones that will bring glory to the Father through His Son.

## NOTES

Prayer Quote: "Our prayer expresses our commitment to Christ. By talking to God we affirm our basic decision to depend on Him." — David Hubbard

Jas. 1:22: Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

<sup>2</sup> Zondervan NIV Study Bible Library, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*.

### Imperative Command

A verb form that expresses action which is to be realized by the exercise of the will of one person upon that of another. (*Summers, Essentials of New Testament Greek, p. 112*). In this case, the expressed will of Jesus upon ours.

2. The prayers that are answered are the ones that will **"bear much fruit."**
3. Fruit comes in many types, sizes and tastes. It takes a good tree to produce good fruit consistently. *See Lk. 6:43-44a.*
4. The best place to look for a definition of good fruit is the fruit of the Spirit. *See Gal. 5:22-23.*
5. The mark of a good disciple is the one who produces good fruit consistently.

D. Paraphrase of Jn. 15:7-8, from *The Message*:

*But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples.*

III. Questions for further study:

- A. In John 14:12-14 and 15:7-8, Jesus clearly states the purpose of God answering prayer in the name of Jesus. What is that purpose or result?
- B. In John 15:8, Jesus states the expected results of answered prayer by His disciples. What are they?
- C. In what practical ways does our bearing "fruit" bring glory to God?
- D. Discuss your understanding of our Lord's promise of disciples doing "greater things."
- E. In both contexts in this study Jesus makes an additional promise, without which none of the "greater things" can be fulfilled. What is that promise? *See Jn. 14:15-17; 15:26-27.*

## NOTES

Lk. 6:43-44a: "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit.

Gal. 5:22-23: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.