

Life Group Discussion Guide

No Greater Love: In the Upper Room with Jesus
Week 5: Divine Life, Divine Love • John 14:12–21

“It would’ve been so great to be alive when Jesus was on earth.”

Have you ever had thoughts like this? Many of us have, when we think about how incredible it must have been for Jesus’ disciples to live with Him, hear His teaching, and witness His miraculous acts firsthand.

And yet, Jesus Himself said, “It is for your good that I am going away” (John 16:7). How could that be? The disciples certainly struggled to understand it. This week, as we continue our journey through the final hours before Jesus’ crucifixion, John’s Gospel reveals three ways followers of Jesus benefit from His return to the Father. Let’s take a look.

1. Greater Works

“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they 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 Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”

John 14:12–14

Have you ever found verse 12 a bit puzzling? How could we do greater things than *Jesus*? The key to understanding what Jesus means here is found at the end of His sentence: “because I am going to the Father.” Jesus returning to the Father marked the advent of a new age—the dawn of God’s kingdom on humanity.

Jesus wants His followers to know that a time of incredible action is coming, a time of great works, even greater than those He’s already done. And who does these greater works? We do and Jesus does. Pastor Jon explained it this way:

“We live in a better time than when Jesus was on earth. How come? Because the church is the kingdom of God in action—Jesus doing great works for and through us. These verses are our invitation to get off the sidelines and join in the work.”

- In what ways did Jesus’ return to the Father mark the dawn of a new age?
- Jesus desires to do greater works for His kingdom through **you**. What would change if you really believed and embraced this reality?

Jesus continues with a promise: “Whatever you ask in my name I will do.” Sometimes people get tripped up here, thinking it means we can ask Jesus for a supermodel spouse, a sports car, or a promotion and He’ll give it to us. But they’re missing something important.

Jesus instructs us to ask *in His name*. His name means Him: His authority, His character, His person, His office. It means asking things that align with who He is.

“What I’ve experienced in my own life is a tension between ‘whatever you ask’ and ‘in my name.’ He means both. And I’ve found that ‘whatever’ must yield to His name. And yet, ‘whatever’ can’t be abandoned, because He said it. He could’ve said, ‘I will do things within reason you ask in my name.’ But He didn’t. This is our Savior, right before He goes to the cross, inviting us into great works that can be limited only by our own selfishness and small faith. Will you enter into the greater works He beckons you to dream up along with Him?”

- Explain in your own words what it means to ask for things in the name of Jesus. Is there anything you’ve been praying for that’s outside of His name? Take time now to surrender your request under the power and authority of Jesus’ name.
- If you were to truly believe Jesus’ *desire* and *ability* to do greater works through you, what would you ask for? Will you ask it now?

2. Greater Guidance

“If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”

John 14:15–17

The word translated “advocate” in verse 16 is the Greek word *paracletos*, from where we get the word Paraclete. This word has been notoriously difficult to translate because there are many nuances. The ESV translates it as helper, the CSB as counselor, and the KJV as comforter. Pastor Jon unpacked three roles this Spirit holds in the life of a believer:

- Comforter:** Comfort can be defined as strength and hope under trial given to you by someone else. This is what the Spirit gives us. He’s with us. He’s present. He’s God-within-us. The trials are still real, but we feel that we can address them and not be overwhelmed or undone by them.
 - Counselor:** The Spirit gives us the counsel of God. He knows the will of the Lord and guides us in following it.
 - Truth:** Jesus emphasizes here, not the Spirit’s holiness, but the Spirit’s ability to communicate truth. The Spirit guides us into all truth and reminds us that Jesus Himself is the Truth.
- Which of these attributes of the Spirit resonate most with you today? Talk about it.

- How have you experienced the working of the Spirit in your life? In what ways would you like to experience more of Him?
- How might you press in closer to His leading and care? Be specific.

Jesus' promise of the coming Spirit was for His followers, not for everyone. He warns, "The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him" (14:17). Here, "the world" refers to "humanity in rebellion against God"—everyone who does not bow to Jesus. In other words, people who don't know Jesus don't know His Spirit.

So, what can you do? If you don't know the Spirit and, therefore, you cannot accept Him, are you forever shut out of God's presence and love?

"No! This is why the gospel is great news. You look to the cross. The most tangible expression of God's love and the only one that will bring you all the way to God is the cross of Jesus. If you will look to the cross and humble yourself before it, Jesus will give you his Spirit—and you will see Him and know Him."

- What are the symptoms of a life lived apart from God and void of His Spirit?
- Have you humbled yourself before the cross, accepted the forgiveness of your sins through Jesus, and received His Spirit? If you're ready, take time now to do just that.

3. Greater Experience of Love

"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

John 14:18–21

Jesus has already told His disciples the Spirit will be "in you," and now he says, "I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." He's revealing a concept that Christians for 2,000 years have struggled to understand: the interpenetration of divine life and human life—a reality that leads to our **Big Idea: Partaking in the divine life is partaking in the divine love.**

Jesus is telling us, "It's for your good that I went back to the Father. The life I'm inviting you into is the never-ending life of the Father, Son, and Spirit. The love I'm inviting you into is the perfect love of the same. You're never alone, and you're never unseen. Partake of our life. Partake of our love."

- According to the verses above, how do we know that we love Jesus? Explain in your own words the connection between obedience and love.
- How does the relationship we can have with God differ from all human relationships? How have you *personally* experienced the difference?

- Have you received the fullness of life and love Jesus won for you on the cross? Take time now to confess your sin and enter into the never-ending life and love of the Father, Son, and Spirit.