ESSAY · FEBRUARY 25, 2016

A Promise Nobody Believes

Written by Bill Perkins

Have you ever considered the unbelievable promises Jesus made? Personally, I find comfort in most of the Lord's promises. For instance, in John 14:27 Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). I believe that promise because I've experienced the peace Jesus offers.

Top of the List

And there are others I believe. But if I were to make a list of the most unbelievable promises Jesus made, there's one that would sit on top of the list. It's found in John 14:12,

"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."

No Ordinary Man

Now if Jesus was an ordinary man who did extraordinary things, like finding a cure for cancer, running the 40 in 3.0 seconds, winning the world chef competition, or something else equally impressive, then I could sometimes, on a happy day, see myself matching his feats—well, except running that fast or finding a cure for cancer—I'm not good at science.

But Jesus was no ordinary man. He healed the blind, the deaf, the paralyzed, the feverish, and lepers. He raised three people from the dead. He turned water into wine, stilled a storm at sea, walked on water and feed as many as 15,000 people with two fish and five loaves of bread.

A Greater Number?

Some biblical students resolve the problem by saying Jesus meant his followers would perform a greater number of deeds. That makes sense and seems to let Jesus off the hook. After all, if we counted all of the good deeds performed by every Christian who ever lived and those living now, we would have done greater deeds than Jesus.

Power Now, Not Later

I would buy-in to that interpretation if it didn't seem like an effort to lighten the load of the promise. An attempt to cover for Jesus. Besides, how would the promise, interpreted that way have encouraged the disciples? Granted, it might have been cool to consider such a generational impact. But if my garage is on fire it wouldn't encourage me to hear my offspring will fight fires. The disciples needed power now, not later.

And so, the promise means what it says. For that reason, it’s on the top of my most unbelievable promises Jesus ever made list.

But before we conclude this unbelievable promise shouldn’t be believed, let’s take a closer look. That’s what we’ll do next week.