

A summary of John 14:1-20

- 1. Prayers that increase our faith (vv.11-14).** In v.12, Jesus says that whoever believes in Him will also do the works that He does. In vv. 13 and 14, He continues by telling His disciples that whatever they ask in His name, He will do it. To believe, in Greek, means to commit, or to trust, that is, to have faith. This means that we must have faith to ask the Lord. When was the last time that the Lord answered our prayer? We may pray much, but can we say that the Lord has answered our prayers? What kind of prayers? Many times, we may pray for personal needs (finding a job, getting good grades, or getting a promotion). We may even pray for miracles. However, what is the asking, or the prayers, that, when answered, cause our faith to increase? These are the prayers “in His name,” that is, when we are one with Him, and we know His need, His burden, which is the church, and the building up of the church. Practically, what does this mean? Do we pray for the brothers and sisters? Do we pray for the salvation of people? Do we pray for the gospel? Do we pray for pillars, that is, serving ones, to be raised up? Do we know the needs of individual saints, and pray for them, one by one? Do we participate in the corporate prayers of the church? We may want the Lord to bless the church, but the Lord will only bless His church if we pray for the church, not just for our own needs. The more we pray for the church, the more the Lord will answer our prayers, and the more faith He will generate in us. This will cause us to pray more, even to adjust and even enhance or elevate our prayers according to the current need of the saints.
- 2. The Father gives the Holy Spirit as the Comforter to us, to indwell us (vv.16-20).** Jesus prayed to the Father to give us another Comforter, which is actually the Spirit, the Spirit of truth (v.17). In Greek, the word *parakletos* is translated either as Comforter, or Helper, or, in other passages in the New Testament, as Advocate (1 John 2:1). In v.16, Jesus says that the Comforter will be with us, with the thought of accompanying us, of being alongside us. However, in v.17, Jesus continues to reveal that the Spirit, or the Comforter, will not only be with us but also in us. This actually is the entire Triune God (the Father, the Son, and the Spirit) dwelling in us, the believers. He dwells in us, and we dwell in Him (v.20). This is a mutual indwelling. How blessed we are! Sometimes, we bemoan the fact that we cannot see Jesus physically, as the disciples in the Gospels were able to see. “If only I had been living in the time of Jesus, how easy it would be to believe in Him!” we sometimes exclaim. Actually, we do not realize that we are much more blessed than the disciples in Jesus’ time. The Holy Spirit dwells in us, to comfort us. How much we need comforting! This again is not just to make us feel happy when we are sad or down. No, this is related to the church, to God’s need. Do we mourn, not for our own situation (because we do not have a job), or do we mourn for the church, for the saints, for the condition of the brothers and sisters? Does our mourning lead us to pray for the saints? Then the Holy Spirit will be the Comforter in us, to comfort us. Actually, the answering of our prayers (see the first point) may be the real comforting to us. Even in our prayers, it is not us praying, but the Holy Spirit in us praying and answering His prayers in us, which eventually becomes our real comfort. For example, when we see brothers and sisters pray, and have their prayers answered, that may be a comfort to us. When we see saints eager to pursue the word (the Bible), or preach the gospel, what a comfort that is to us. When we speak something for the Lord, and several saints respond, or remember what we said, the Holy Spirit comforts us. The Holy Spirit in us, and in the saints, is a marvelous comfort to us, to cause us to give ourselves more to the Lord, and love Him more.

- 3. Our works must become our living (vv.11-12).** Jesus was in the Father, and the Father was in Him (v.11). This indicates the union that He had with the Father. He was one with the Father in His living. Therefore, all that He did (His works), reflected His living. His works were not apart from His living. What about us? Do our works match our living, or are they apart? For example, the church may preach the gospel every week, on a certain day and at a certain time. We may participate in the gospel preaching, to distribute tracts. This is very good. However, we need to grow so that our preaching of the gospel is not merely an activity, to be done at a certain time and place, or a work, but eventually becomes our person. Am I in the Lord when I preach the gospel? If so, then I will also have His burden for people, to testify not as a duty, but as an expression of my person. Wherever I am, I may be a person of the gospel. This does not necessarily mean that I become a capable gospel preacher, or an evangelist, but preaching the gospel becomes my joy and my living.
- 4. We may do greater works than Jesus! (vv.1-2,10-12).** This may seem hard to believe. Why did Jesus say this? We must go to vv.1-2. In v.1, He tells us to believe not only in God, but in Him. Then, in v.2., He says that in His Father's house are many abodes. Many believers have misunderstood this verse to mean physical mansions in heaven, perhaps because of the translation of the Greek word *manay*, which means abode or residence. These abodes do not refer to mansions, but to all the believers (those who believe in Jesus), together, to form the house of the Father (v.2), or the Body of Christ. This is perhaps the first allusion to the Body of Christ in the New Testament, not referring only to the individual Jesus, but to the many believers to form His body. It is the Body of Christ which would do the greater works, that is, to preach the gospel, to spread the testimony and kingdom of God, not just in Jerusalem, but throughout the earth (Acts 1:8). When Jesus was on the earth, His sphere of operation was the nation of Israel. After His death and resurrection, His sphere of operation is the entire earth, through all His believers, in whom He indwells, preaching the gospel and multiplying His eternal life. For example, every time we preach the gospel to our friend, or neighbor, every time we pray for the church, every time we visit someone, in union with Christ, the Body of Christ is being built. The indwelling Christ in us, in all the believers, as His Body, is engaged in greater works than the individual Christ could ever do. Again, how privileged we are to participate today in the spreading of His testimony.
- 5. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life (v.6).** How can we know the Father? We must come to the Son (Jesus). He is the way. In Greek, the word *hodos* means road, or journey. To know God, we must begin to walk on a way. The world never provides a way to know Christ or exalt Him. Only the church life provides a way. What is the church life? Christ, but practically, Christ in the believers (the brothers and sisters). How do we come to God? Through Jesus, but through Jesus manifested and lived out of believers. Then, as we live in the church life, we hear the word of God, the Bible, spoken by the brothers and sisters, or servants of God. Or a brother or sister may begin to accompany us and read the Bible with us. The word of God begins to become truth to us. God becomes more real. The church life becomes sweet and joyful. The brothers and sisters become more lovely. Eventually, we begin to enjoy the divine, eternal life. We no longer come to the church gatherings just because of the social life, or to receive some blessing. We may begin to view the saints, not just as our friends or helpers, but we may begin to know the Christ in them. We may begin to live, not just for this age, but for the next age, that is, for eternity. Our faith in the Lord begins to grow, as well as our faith in the Christ in the saints. We may know Him more, and we may even be more willing to follow His way, that is, to deny ourselves, even as He denied Himself to go to the cross (vv.3-4).