

GREATER THINGS, WEEK 1

Scripture used: [Acts 1:8 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon began a new sermon series called “Greater Things!” this week. We are all feeling the effects of a broken world. We are in the midst of a global pandemic, an economic crisis, concerns about the health of ourselves and our loved ones, and the stresses of sheltering in place. It is so tempting to become overwhelmed and give in to a spirit of anger, or fear, or anxiety, or all three. But Pastor Hurmon reminds us that we are promised greater things by God! We can anticipate a better world in spite of all this uncertainty. How? By reading [the Book of Acts](#), where Luke describes the difficulties of the early church. Their stories can help inspire and guide us as we try to understand how to act in this troubling time.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **We are radically loved.** The disciples faced persecution from all sides. It wasn't just the Jews who were hostile to them. The entire Roman Empire wanted to stamp out Christianity! In spite of the suffering of the early church, they never doubted that God loved them, because they remembered and understood the reality of the cross. [Romans 8:32 \(NIV\)](#) declares, “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” Jesus' death on the cross proved that God would do anything for His people, so this gave the early church resilience in the face of suffering.
- 2) **We can be radically bold.** [Acts 1:3 \(NLT\)](#) describes how the disciples spent 40 days with Jesus after He rose from the dead. He proved He was alive, and taught them more about the Kingdom of Heaven. This time laid a rock-solid foundation of faith. They didn't doubt that Jesus had authority over life and death itself. That confidence allowed them to face any obstacle. But because these Jesus followers knew they had eternal life, there was no punishment that could threaten them. Death was not the end, so they faced torture and death without fear.
- 3) **We are radically empowered.** Jesus told the disciples in [I John 14:12 \(NLT\)](#) that they would be able to do even greater works than Him. Jesus wanted them to take action, to teach and heal others. They should not just receive the Good News in a passive way. They had a responsibility to spread the gospel to others, especially during difficult times.
- 4) **We must ask for greater things.** God is greater than the world, as it says in [I John 4:4 \(KJV\)](#). We cannot stay trapped and bound by sin. We cannot stagnate. We are not powerless. We can act boldly, knowing that God is greater than this pandemic, and greater than an economic crisis. If we pray to Him, He will show us a way!

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Early Christians did not have an easy time establishing the church. They were persecuted by the Roman Empire, the most powerful government in world history. Their radical faith was based on the example of the risen Jesus, who appeared to them for 40 days to encourage them to preach the gospel. Today we are also facing persecution and fear, and must be equally radical. Do you feel empowered by God to rise to the needs of the world?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Pastor Hurmon asked us to consider the difficult topic of our own death. This was part of how his faith was tested as a young Christian. Do you ever think about death? When you do, how does it change the way you think about Jesus? Are you confident that you can claim everlasting life through Him? If you don't feel that confidence, consider what you need to gain that assurance. Is it a deeper experience of God through prayer? Is it a more robust historical or apologetic understanding of Jesus' death and resurrection? Consider discussing with your life group what has strengthened their conviction.
- 3) **DO** - Read at least 3 chapters of [the Book of Acts](#). Pray to God before you read “Lord, I am asking you to show me something greater!” and then reflect on what He puts in your heart. Join us next Sunday as we continue to learn from the early church in Acts how to strive for greater things in the midst of challenging times!