

GREATER THINGS - CLASS OF 2020

Scripture used: [Acts 8:1-4 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon began this week's sermon with a blessing on the Class of 2020. God has added His strength to their tenacity of these graduates, and as a church we are all so proud of their accomplishments! Unfortunately, this amazing milestone is taking place in a much different context. The global pandemic has demonstrated how unfair, painful, dangerous, and uncertain the world can be. But Jesus has a triumphant message, even now. God wants to do greater things through us. We must decide that, like the early Christians who faced extreme persecution, we will overcome the world.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **Christians must live in a broken world.** This is obvious as the world suffers through a global pandemic and economic devastation. Each of us is affected in our own way. Some have lost family and friends. Some have lost jobs. Some are experiencing financial hardship. Some are dealing with toxic stress in relationships. Our graduates are facing a special kind of pain, since they are robbed of the special ceremonies and parties that recognize their huge academic achievements. All of these things are tragic, and yet our world is no better or worse than Jerusalem when early Christians were establishing the church.
- 2) **Broken life produces obstacles and disruptions.** After the ascension of Jesus, the disciples spread the Good News, preaching and healing and taking care of people. People converted by the hundreds and thousands. This rapid growth led to a backlash, culminating in the death of Stephen. This tested the commitment and faith of the church severely, but they still managed to be a beacon of hope.
 - a. **We must have faith in a power greater than ourselves.** It's important that we believe in ourselves, but there is a limit. When things get rough, we will quit if the only thing we have to hold onto is us.
 - b. **We must focus on our "ultimate concern."** The early Christians continued to preach the Good News even after fleeing Jerusalem. They were a part of a movement that offered the world eternal life, and could pursue that goal wherever they were.
 - c. **We must see opportunities where others see obstacles.** Everything can be turned toward God's plan. As the early church scattered, they went to Judaea and Samaria, which is exactly Jesus prophesied in [Acts 1:8 \(NLT\)](#).
- 3) **We must practice an Overcomer Mindset.** When asked in national survey, tens of thousands of college students identified a meaningful life as their #1 concern. Early Christians had the exact same concerns. They found their meaning and purpose in Jesus, and that empowered them to overcome remarkable odds. This "Overcomer Mindset" is based on three behaviors that we can put in our practice every day.
 - a. **I will not quit.** No matter what happens, there is always something that I can do.
 - b. **I will keep learning.** Life is about growing, changing, and adapting.
 - c. **I will be grateful.** I lack for nothing; I have so many blessings in my life already.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - We have to start from the reality that our world is broken. That is the beginning of a mature perspective. Then it takes faith, love, and courage to be a shining example to others. Don't get into despair, depression, and fear. Be a light! How are you experiencing the brokenness of the world right now?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Jesus did not promise an easy life, but instead the strength to make it through every obstacle, even death. As we adopt an Overcomer Mindset, God will push us through all obstacles toward our destiny. There will be suffering, of course, but it will be worth it. What are you willing to suffer for?
- 3) **DO** - This is a difficult time for every single person, but don't give in to despair. Pastor Hurmon asked us to affirm the statement "I choose to be an overcomer!" Ask God to show you a practical way to support the people around you, or to celebrate someone in your life who is graduating. Next week, we will engage together with the pain and tragedy of the death of George Floyd and the recent protests. Join us and invite friends as we discuss together how Jesus calls His followers to be a light.