



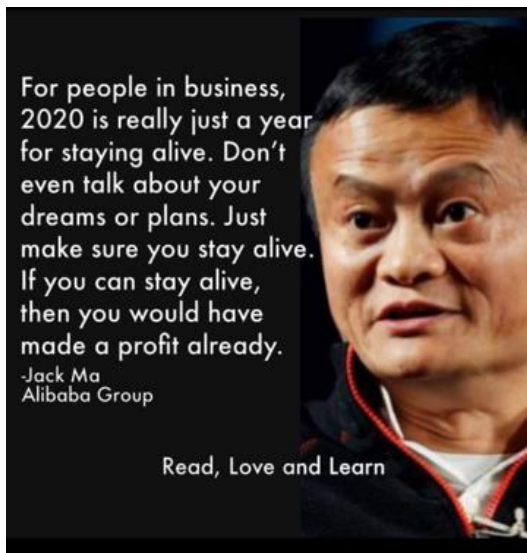
## DOING THE GREATER WORKS/THINGS

Sermon delivered on 10th May 2020 (with adaptation)

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**“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.” – John 14:12**

We are in the midst of a pandemic with all of us stuck at home for more than a month. Can we do greater works/things in a time like this?



Jack Ma tells people in business, “Don’t even talk about your dreams or plans. Just make sure you stay alive.”

He continued, “If you can stay alive, then you would have made a profit already.”

Obviously, he is using “business language”, aware that many companies are having

problems and facing challenges to stay alive.

How about churches today?

We have big and small churches been “closed” for many weeks, including JCC. In fact, it is only the physical church premises that are closed while the church as a body of Christ is still open with members engaging with one another facilitated by technology. We still communicate with one another, pray for one another and encourage one another.

In the church context, do we believe that 2020 is a year for “just staying alive” and “don’t talk about dreams and plans”?

Knowing Christ makes us feel differently. We have God on our side, and we are confident that He will listen to our prayers when we turn to Him.

As we feel very much being “locked down” at home and “locked out of the outside world, doing nothing, a lot of things are in fact happening and changing. While we were “staying at home and doing nothing,” a Sunday Times opinion piece last week listed 100 ways the world has changed in the first 100 days of COVID-19. It made me think about how the church has also changed in many ways:

- a) The way we worship – As I appear in front of your computer now, you see me literally talking to only one person in the sanctuary in JCC from where this live worship service is broadcast. Between me and the video technician are many empty pews. Yet, I know that I am talking to many of you out there in your homes now.



- b) The way we conduct Sunday School – Little ones are learning to do zooming. 😊



- c) The way we do equipping – Cell leaders training with Rev. Huan with the aid of zooming.
- d) The way we do prayer meetings – some of us are still adjusting to talking with one another at “close distance” in front of computer screens.

While all of us are staying in our homes, a lot of happenings are taking place. We are still face-to-face in our meetings. Although we are not next to each other in the flesh, it feels like the person you are talking to is just in front of you.

With all the changes taking place while we are all staying at home, can we still do greater works/things as we are exhorted in John 10:12?

Or should we wait for 1<sup>st</sup> June when the Circuit Breaker is lifted; or wait till we get back to meet in the church after COVID-19? Will everything go back to the old pattern, same old habits and same old style of doing ministry:

- We sit on the familiar pews regularly as before COVID-19;

- we behave the same way with the same mindset as before COVID-19 and
- we do the same old things in our ministries, using the same methods as in the past years?

It is often said that change is the only constant in life. You do things the way you like, but change comes uninvited and beyond your control.

After a major change in the world, there will be a re-setting of life. Government policies are re-evaluated, people's careers, relationships and habits are transformed.

After a major change in the Church, it is also opportune to press the RESET button. The Church does not stand still – we renew ourselves, re-focus our ministries, restructure our methods and become refreshed to DO GREATER THINGS!

Bros and sisters, I believe we can DO GREATER THINGS now – not because we can by our own abilities; BUT in Christ, we are able to be used by Him to do God's things that can make a greater impact on the world, profiting communities and families in our lifetime.

The story in John 14 tells us that the disciples of Jesus were at a loss and directionless in their lives because they sensed uncertainties ahead. Massive fears were triggered in their hearts. From verses 1, 5 and 8, we can sense their frantic pulse. They were facing three major crises:

- The crisis of the “unknown destination” – “Where are you going?”
- The crisis of the “unknown direction” – How to go and which way to take?
- The crisis of doubt regarding the presence of God – ““Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.””

The disciples were paralysed totally by their worries, so how to even dare to dream about doing greater things of God? Today, are we like the disciples – afraid, losing original enthusiasm and feeling spiritually defeated? Does our pulse beat as furiously as the disciples’ because we are “locked down” and overcome by fears?

For three years, the disciples of Jesus were sheltered from life problems and challenges. Examples:

- Jesus calmed the storm when they could have drowned in the sea.
- Jesus defended them against criticisms from their enemies.
- Jesus provided them physical food (feeding of 5000).
- Jesus demonstrated power of healing the sick, lame, blind, deaf and “cancer of the day” leprosy.
- Jesus showed them spiritual authority by casting out demons.

Wow, three years of walking with Jesus, protected by a strong shelter! But now, they are overwhelmed by a spirit of fear and desperation because of three perceived crises.

**Jesus says. “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.” – John 14:12**

Do we have no dreams, not even small plans because we are “locked down now” and overcome by fears?

DOING GREATER WORKS/THINGS can only happen on sunshine days, or when we are on top in our spiritual life (like being at the mountain-top with Jesus)?

During a crisis, such as when facing the unknowns of COVID-19, the challenges in the workplace or in family, it reflects our defeatist feeling similar to the feelings of the disciples like Thomas and Philip if we think like these:

- The Word of Jesus cannot be implemented in our lives;
- the Word of Jesus is not weatherproof and
- “I am helpless myself; you take care of yourself.”

When we are in the same despondent situation as the disciples, we can easily get the wrong idea that the anchor of our life assurance or life security is shaken and going to be withdrawn. Brothers and sisters, is Jesus departing and leaving us alone to fend for ourselves?

Is our peace in Christ affected or robbed by our enemies when all our earthly pursuits, earthly passions and earthly security are being tested? It may be about our jobs, health, wealth, relationships, life goals. It is a challenging time, but not a time for us to say we have no dreams. It is Kairos Time for you and me to reassess our dreams and align them with God’s purpose for us to DO GREATER WORKS/THINGS, knowing that Jesus is with us. We can at least start with SMALL PLANS rather than NO PLANS.

COVID-19 should not:

- determine how we should live our life in Christ today;
- cripple our life in Christ;
- paralyse our dreams and goals for God;
- push us to sleepless nights;
- stop us from serving one another and our community or
- stop us from praying and doing God’s work in our lives and in the lives of the people we are praying for.

We can do greater things not because we can by ourselves; but in Christ we can be powerful and useful vessels for Him. Today is the 5th Sunday of Easter, and I am looking ahead to

## “DOING GREATER WORKS/THINGS”

- 1) Our **Eternal DESTINATION** is assured (HOPE) v2
- 2) Our **Eternal LIFE** is guaranteed (PEACE) v3b-4
- 3) **God’s PRESENCE** is promised (CONFIDENCE) v8-10
- 4) **Our PRAYERS ARE** heard. (BOLDNESS) v13-14

31st May, which is Pentecost Sunday, to be inspired by the potential that the Holy Spirit can empower us to do greater things.

Pentecost Sunday reminds us of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon every disciple of Jesus; whereby the disciples turned the world upside down, in their generations, when they were living in fears and uncertainties – close to 50 days, after Jesus’ ascension. They reached out to the poor, to the lost, those in bondages with boldness and in faith as they were empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Here is an SMS testimony from an elderly lady who experienced healing from Parkinson’s disease with JCC intercessors praying for her:

*“I have also experienced healing for Parkinsons. I know some of your intercessors (JCC intercessors) have been praying for me. You saw me last year when I found it so hard to walk or sit or stand. See the healing that has*

*taken place in the videos taken at home last week.  
Hallelujah!!”*

(Note: video shown with permission during worship service)

A few days ago, a church called us up enquiring how we could help them set up the Project Befrienders (providing shelters to the needy). We ourselves struggled two weeks ago when we tried to put our plans together. We are new in this ministry; yet, God opens doors for us to help another church. Is this a type of greater works we can do?



We can trust God that He can use us to make greater impact in the lives of our neighbours when we take the first step in connecting with them:

- to bring healing to our friends;
- to bring comfort to the desperate or
- to bring peace and hope to the hopeless.

These are but a few examples of the “greater works” that we can do today in whatever scale as we are empowered.

Will you rise up today?