

160. The Gospel of John—16:10-11

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit—Part 2

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For the last few weeks in our study in John's Gospel we have been focusing on Jesus' final words to His disciples before His crucifixion (Chapters 13-16).

Their hearts were troubled—primarily because He told them He was going away and that they couldn't go with Him (13:36).

In saying this, He was in essence telling them that **they would have to carry on without Him**, that just because He was going away didn't mean the work of the Kingdom was going to stop.

Upon hearing this—their hearts were **immediately gripped with fear**. How could they ever carry on the vital work of spreading the Gospel and building God's Kingdom upon the earth without Jesus being with them?

So, Jesus sensing their troubled hearts spends most of Chapter 14 comforting and reassuring them.

The main way Jesus encouraged His disciples that evening was by telling them—yes, *He* was going away, but He was not going to leave them alone and helpless like orphans. He promised them He was going to send them **another Helper, the Holy Spirit**, who would abide with them forever (John 14:15-18).

Based on this section of John's Gospel (16:5-15)—we began a series which I've entitled, "*The Ministry of the Holy Spirit*." The main reason for this series is that there is a real lack of teaching about The Holy Spirit today.

That is not to say that The Holy Spirit is not *mentioned* from pulpits—all pastors give The Holy Spirit 'lip service' but not many actually teach from the Bible on what the ministry of The Holy Spirit is all about in this world.

Let me say this, I believe the effectiveness, the fruitfulness and the overall dynamic and victory that characterizes your life as a Christian will be directly proportionate to your understanding of The Holy Spirit and how much you honor and obey Him with your life.

>>> So, in that regard this could be one of the most important studies you will ever hear—and therefore, as I said last week, "*It behooves us to pay attention to the words of Jesus on the ministry of The Holy Spirit in this passage in John 16.*"

REFLECTION: What did Jesus do in direct response to the gripping fear the disciples were experiencing?

Alright, just what is the ministry of The Holy Spirit you ask?

Well, it differs in that the ministry of The Holy Spirit to *unbelievers* is different from the ministry of The Holy Spirit to *believers* in Christ.

I. The Ministry of The Holy Spirit to the Unbeliever—verses 8-11

John 16:5-8 (NKJV)

⁵ "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

The key word here is **convict**—which in the Greek is a legal term that means “to bring to light, to expose, to refute and convince.”

Conviction is God’s way of showing a person his or her sin—because if they never see themselves as sinners, they will never see their need for a Savior and hence—they will never turn to Jesus to save them.

Jesus promised, when He ascended back to His Father, He would send The Holy Spirit into the world (which happened on Pentecost) “and when He has come” Jesus said, “**He will convict the world (unbelievers) of 3 things; of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.**”

Now thankfully, the Lord went on to explain what He meant by further revealing to us that all of this conviction has *Himself* as the focus—and is directed at unbelievers.

REFLECTION: Why is “conviction” by the Holy Spirit so essential to all people?

A. Sin—verse 9

John 16:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin...⁹ of sin, **because they do not believe in Me...**

Jesus didn’t say The Holy Spirit would convict the people of this world of all their ‘sins’ (plural) as in *lying, cheating, stealing* etc.

Jesus said The Holy Spirit would convict **unbelievers** of ‘sin’ (singular)—“...because they do not believe in Me.” (verse 9)

The Holy Spirit is convicting the people of this world of one sin in particular—**the sin of not believing in Jesus Christ for salvation.**

Please understand, **it is unbelief that condemns a person to hell**—not the committing of individual sins. Most people don't understand what God has clearly said on this subject, that it isn't how *good* they are or how *bad* they are that determines whether they make it into heaven or spend eternity in hell—their sins (plural) are not the determining factor.

What determines whether a person makes it into heaven or is sent to hell—is whether they accept or reject Jesus as their Savior. (John 3:18–21)

➤ “So then, what you’re saying is that individual sins like lying, stealing, committing adultery or even murder don’t matter to God?!”

Of course, they matter to God—and they should definitely matter to every unbeliever alive.

The Bible teaches that our good deeds don't get us into heaven, nor do our bad deeds send us to hell—that's true, but that doesn't mean they don't matter or are unimportant.

You see, a Christian's good deeds and an unbeliever's evil deeds will determine their degree of reward in heaven or punishment in hell.

REFLECTION: What is the sin Jesus convicts the world of? Who does Jesus' convict?

B. Righteousness—verse 10

John 16:8, 10 (NKJV)
⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness...

As we said last time, when we read this, we want to apply it to ourselves—in other words, that The Holy Spirit will convict *me (a Christian)* of *my* lack of righteousness (of not being right with God by living a carnal life).

But here again Jesus goes on to explain what He is saying—

John 16:8, 10
And when He has come, He will convict the world of...righteousness...¹⁰ of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and you see Me no more;

Now, even though Jesus '*clarifies*' what righteousness The Holy Spirit will convict the world of—it still seems a little ambiguous.

What exactly is Jesus teaching us here?

One author and commentator shares his insights into Jesus' statement—

"The righteousness here is that which belongs to Jesus Christ by nature as the holy Son of God. This is the flip side of the previous point; not only does the Spirit convict unbelievers of their sin, but also of the necessity of having the perfect righteousness of Christ (cf. Matt. 5:20, 48). When their wickedness is compared to His sinless holiness, their sin is seen more truly for the detestable evil that it is. And the sinner is face-to-face with the impossibility of salvation by any effort, work, or achievement he may do."

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT2)

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

Yet, when it comes to the people of this world in general—most everyone proclaims, *"each his own goodness (Proverbs 20:6)."*

In other words, almost everybody feels that they're a 'good person' and because of it they believe God will accept them into heaven when they die.

Early in Jesus' ministry, He said to His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount something that must have blown their minds. He said, *"Unless your righteousness **exceeds** that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."* (Matthew 5:20)

If anybody could have gotten into heaven by works of righteousness—it would have been the scribes and the Pharisees! They spent their whole lives trying to keep every aspect of the law down to the smallest detail (even tithing from their herb gardens!).

Because of this the Jews had a saying back then, *"If only two people made it into heaven, one would be a scribe and the other would be a Pharisee."*

REFLECTION: How would you define righteousness?

Paul the Apostle was a Pharisee at one time and in describing his life before he met Jesus, he said—

Philippians 3:5-6 (NLT2)

⁵ I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. ⁶ I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.

But then **God opened Paul's eyes to the fact that keeping the Law (or trying to keep it) could never save him, that the Law was designed by God not to make a person righteous but to drive them to Jesus for righteousness and salvation**—he went on to say:

Philippians 3:7-9 (NLT2)

⁷ I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. ⁸ Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ ⁹ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith.

You see Paul came to understand what Jesus is teaching here in John 16:10 about the kind of righteousness that God will receive into heaven. When Jesus ascended to heaven after His death and resurrection (Acts 1:9-10) and was received by the Father it signified that—**the only righteousness that God would accept into heaven is the righteousness of Christ!**

How righteous was Jesus? He was perfect—He *never* sinned!

So, this tells us that **the only kind of person that God will accept into heaven is one who is as righteous and as perfect and sinless as Jesus.** You may say, *"That's impossible no one is perfect! No one has ever lived their life without committing sin!"*

Good, now you're getting it!

It's impossible for me to be as righteous as Jesus Christ—no matter how hard I try, no matter how many church services or masses I attend, no matter how many candles I light, or how many commandments I keep—I will never live a perfect and sinless life here on the earth!

And anyone who thinks they are living that kind of life is deceiving themselves:

1 John 1:8 (NKJV)

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

But the Bible declares if I put my faith in Jesus then God imputes the righteousness of Christ to my account—

James 2:23 (NKJV)

²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, *"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."*...

Romans 3:21-22 (NLT2)

²¹ But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. ²² We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT2)

²¹ For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Romans 10:1-4 (NLT2)

¹ Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved.

² I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. ³ For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Refusing to accept God's way, they cling to their own way of getting right with

God by trying to keep the law. ⁴ For Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in him are made right with God.

REFLECTION: Is there anything you can do to be as righteous and as perfect and sinless as Jesus? To be acceptable to God, what must you do to be made right with God?

So, Jesus said that when The Holy Spirit comes, He would convict the world of:

C. Judgment—verse 11

John 16:11 (NKJV)
¹¹ ...of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Satan is called here—the ‘ruler of this world’ by Jesus—

1 John 5:19 (NKJV)
¹⁹ We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway* [control] of the wicked one.

However, at the cross Jesus judged Satan and his demons and this entire world system that he is in control of—

Colossians 2:15 (NKJV)
¹⁵ Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it [the Cross].

It’s difficult for people to understand that we live in a judged world—a condemned world.

I have heard many people over the years say that they don’t need to accept Jesus as their Savior—they believe that, although they’re not perfect, they feel they’re still good enough to make into heaven.

They feel that when they stand before God, they’ll get their ‘*day in court*’ and present their case and God will hear their evidence, all their good deeds, and let them into heaven.

John 3:16-18 (NKJV)
¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is **condemned already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

All of the people of this world are condemned already—it happened in the Garden of Eden when man first sinned and was pronounced guilty by God (when God imposed the curse).

Man tried to cover his guilt with the works of his hands (fig leaves = ‘religion’)—but God wouldn’t allow it and covered their nakedness with the skins of animals (blood sacrifice)—even as the prophet Isaiah would go on to say: *“But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness’s are like filthy rags [in the sight of God].”* (Isaiah 64:6)

We live in a world that has already been judged and is like the guilty man waiting on death row for his execution. **But at Calvary’s Cross Jesus condemned (judged) the devil who had us in bondage and provided a way for condemned humanity to receive a pardon...**(Be sure to check out [last week’s message](#)).

That’s bad news for some—but good news for others!

It’s bad news for those who are living in rebellion against God because a day of reckoning is coming. People in rebellion should take note, if the ruler of this world (Satan) has been judged so have his subjects—but God in His mercy is giving them time to repent and receive His pardon:

Acts 17:30-31 (NLT2)

³⁰ “God overlooked people’s ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him. ³¹ For he has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man [Jesus] he has appointed, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead.”

We know that there is a day of judgment coming—*“It is appointed for men to die once, and after this the judgment.”* (Hebrews 9:27)

The Great White Throne judgment is mentioned by John in the Book of Revelation Chapter 20:11-15.

People may think that they’re getting by with their sin and evil—they’re not. One day, every unbeliever who has ever lived will stand before God, the books will be open (God’s Law and their ledger)—and they will be judged according to their works.

REFLECTION: What does “The Day of Judgement mean to you?”

The Bible says that all things are open and naked in the eyes of Him to whom we must someday give an accounting (Hebrews 4:13).

You can’t hide anything from God—your whole life is an open book—He knows it all. The beautiful thing though is by my believing in Jesus Christ, all the negative things I’ve ever done—have been blotted out, erased, forgiven!

REFLECTION: Have you tried to hide your sin from God?

So, the fact that the ruler of this world has been judged is bad news for all who are living in rebellion against God and who refuse to repent—eternal judgment is coming!

But it is good news for those who have put their faith in Jesus—not only because they will be accepted into heaven when they die—but also because of what Jesus said here in verse 11 about the ruler of this world having been judged.

Satan is the ruler of this world—he controls it, but at Calvary Satan was judged and his power over people was broken for anyone who receives Jesus as their Savior.

There is hope for all those whose lives have been lived under the horrible bondage of sin and Satan—there is freedom in Christ. Freedom from heroin, cocaine, alcohol, from emotional scars like sexual abuse and other debilitating emotions. I have seen it over and over again—people whose lives were destroyed by sin God has made brand new in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT2)

¹⁷ This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

Satan can no longer rule over me—his power has been broken—a stronger power than the devil is now at work in my life—*“But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory...because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.” (1 John 4:4)*

The Spirit convicts’ people of the reality that there’s hope for a new life—a life of freedom from the bondage of sin.

But that that freedom only comes through Jesus Christ, who at Calvary’s Cross has judged the ruler of this world and has broken his hold over their lives! As children of God, we don’t have to live anymore in bondage to the power of darkness, in the grip of Satan—we through Jesus Christ have been set free!

REFLECTION: How can you break away from the sin bondage of Satan?

Max Lucado—

“Think of it this way. Sin put you in prison. Sin locked you behind the bars of guilt and shame and deception and fear. Sin did nothing but shackle you to the wall of misery. Then Jesus came and paid your bail. He served your time; he satisfied the penalty and set you free. Christ died, and when you cast your lot with him, your old self died too.

The only way to be set free from the prison of sin is to serve its penalty. In this case the penalty is death. Someone has to die, either you or a heaven-sent substitute. You cannot leave prison unless there is a death. But that death has occurred at Calvary. And when Jesus died, you died to sin's claim on your life. You are free.

Near the city of Sao José dos Campos, Brazil, is a remarkable facility. Twenty years ago the Brazilian government turned a prison over to two Christians. The institution was renamed Humaita, and the plan was to run it on Christian principles. With the exception of two full-time staff, all the work is done by inmates. Families outside the prison adopt an inmate to work with during and after his term. Chuck Colson visited the prison and made this report:

'When I visited Humaita I found the inmates smiling—particularly the murderer who held the keys, opened the gates and let me in. Wherever I walked I saw men at peace. I saw clean living areas, people working industriously. The walls were decorated with Biblical sayings from Psalms and Proverbs.... My guide escorted me to the notorious prison cell once used for torture. Today, he told me, that block houses only a single inmate. As we reached the end of a long concrete corridor and he put the key in the lock, he paused and asked, "Are you sure you want to go in?" "Of course," I replied impatiently, "I've been in isolation cells all over the world." Slowly he swung open the massive door, and I saw the prisoner in that punishment cell—a crucifix, beautifully carved by the Humaita inmates—the prisoner Jesus, hanging on a Cross.

'He's doing time for the rest of us', my guide said softly."

Next time we'll continue to look at the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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