

## 32. The Work of the Holy Spirit

### John 16:5-16

Warm-Up Question: Have you ever had your car breakdown, how did you get back on the road?

Alternative Warm up: Who was your favorite teacher growing up, and what did you like best about him or her?

Years ago, my wife Sandy and I went with a team of seven on a short-term mission trip from England, visiting France, Spain, and Portugal. We visited missionaries and pastors in those countries helping them with their evangelism efforts. We did street preaching, mime and various creative means to reach people across language barriers with the gospel. All we had to accomplish this journey of several thousand-miles was a twenty-year-old van! We moved the back seats out for sleeping room in the back. Can I give you a word of advice? When doing a long trip like that, it is not wise to use an old van! It was all we had at the time. (I don't regret the trip, though!) We got several hundred miles into France and were driving through the night in the middle of nowhere, when all of a sudden the red light on the dashboard came on. What would you have done? We did what anyone would do in those circumstances; we didn't want an engine blow out so we stopped for the rest of the night and slept in the van, and drove to the nearest town the next morning to find a garage and have it fixed. It is foolish to carry on driving with a red light on your dashboard. The red light is there to tell you something is wrong. In the passage we are studying today, we will see aspects of the Holy Spirit's ministry of "putting the red light on," as a matter of speaking, in order to alert us and convict us of sin. It is like a warning light for the engine of our lives.

Before we get into reading and talking about the Holy Spirit, I would like to give some context for the verses we are studying. It is Jesus' last night before the crucifixion. John the apostle, in writing to us a number of years later, recalls that the twelve of them had left the upper room, the place of the Last Supper (the end verse of John chapter 14), and were on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane just east of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. It is likely that they stopped on the way somewhere near the Temple with the view of the golden vine that hung on the outside entrance. Wherever it was, He stopped to teach them that He is the True Vine of Israel and that they are the fruit bearing branches (John 15). He begins to prepare them for the hours ahead, when He knew that the Shepherd will be smitten and the sheep will be scattered. He had warned them repeatedly this night and the next day, but they could not imagine such a thing happening to their beloved master and teacher. When He had told them, the thought was not lodged in the data banks of their minds, but filed away somewhere, as they could not understand what the Lord of Glory was saying to them. This evening was different though. His appearance and His heart-felt words told them that the time was near as He began to prepare them for His departure. Let's read His words to the disciples that night:

<sup>5</sup>but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' <sup>6</sup>Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. <sup>7</sup>But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away,

the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup>When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup>about sin, because people do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup>about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; <sup>11</sup>and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. <sup>12</sup>“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. <sup>13</sup>But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. <sup>14</sup>He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. <sup>15</sup>All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”<sup>16</sup>Jesus went on to say, “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me” (John 16:5-16).

They finally understood that He was leaving them and they were filled with grief at the thought. I think there were many tears and sobbing as He shared these words we have just read. More than three years living with their master, who had shared His heart with them, would tear raw emotions from them as great sadness fell on them. “How could He be leaving us?” “There has to be some other way!” Surely these would have been their thoughts. Their reason was assaulted. But there was no other way but the way of the cross.

He knew that once they arrived in the Garden of Gethsemane, His mind and heart had to be focused in prayer against satanic invisible forces. Satan and his minions would have been full of glee that their plan was unfolding and they would soon have the Lord under their control to do with as they wanted. How they would enjoy pulling out His beard, flaying His back and finally killing Him. Before Jesus and the disciples got to the Garden, He had to prepare them for the hours ahead so that they would not fall away when confronted with the hour of His death.

In the midst of their tears and sobbing He told them that it was good for them that He was going away, for with His departure He would send the Holy Spirit. Again we see here another indirect statement as to the Lordship of Christ. If He were just a man, He would not be talking about sending God the Holy Spirit to them. No man sends God to complete His commands, but Jesus was the God Man, the one sent by His Father into the world to make men right with God.

The work and ministry of Christ through His Body would be considerably multiplied and reproduced by the coming of the Spirit into the world of humanity. As long as Jesus was in His corporal body, His ministry would be limited, but now, due to His gift of righteousness to man, He would make it possible for He who is the Holy Spirit to be able to take up residence within the believer’s life. This would have been a shocking statement to the disciples. Up to that point the Holy Spirit’s presence had come only for special tasks and special people, but here they were being told that the Spirit would come on them and of course, us as well who are believers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. How

wonderful a thought that the Spirit would come and live in the temples of the hearts of men and women!

### **The Spirit's Work in the World (Verses 8-11)**

Jesus told them that there would be three aspects of the Spirit's work in the world. He would "prove" or "convict" the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8). Before we take a look at these three, let's talk about this word to *prove* or *convict*, depending on your English translation. The Greek word used is *elegcho*. It was a word that was used to describe the cross examination of a person under judgment in a court setting. The picture one should get is a person under heavy cross-examination from with the evidence building on top of the man to the degree that he caves under pressure to admit his guilt before a Holy God. Only when a man sees His need of salvation does he respond to the gospel. The Greek word *elegcho* was used to convince, convict or prove a person guilty.

[What would you say are the most important things Jesus has to say about the work of the "Advocate, the Holy Spirit from verses 8-15? What is the Spirit to testify about?](#)

I have read and heard much about revivals in the past, and one of the things that I have seen is that as a result of believing prayer, the Spirit has come to an area, town or city in a strong sense of God's presence and with it, conviction of sin. When Charles Finney during the Great Awakening in the United States would come into a town, people would notice a difference in the spiritual atmosphere around the city. People would be struck with a sense of emptiness and a guilt concerning their sin. He had a powerful touch of the Holy Spirit upon his life that seemed to stay with him in great power as he went from village to village preaching the Word of God. When he spoke about Christ, people would fall on the floor under a great conviction of spirit, crying for God to have mercy on their souls. There seemed to be a special presence over the area where he would be preaching. He says of one time:

"The state of things in the village and in the surrounding area was such that no one could come into the village without feeling awestruck with the impression that God was there in a peculiar way. As an example of this I will relate a particular incident. The sheriff of the county resided in Utica. There were two courthouses in the county, one in Rome and the other in Utica (New York State). Consequently, the sheriff, Bryant by name, came to Rome quite frequently. He later told me that he had heard of the state of things at Rome, and he, together with many others in Utica, had laughed a great deal about it. One day it was necessary for him to come to Rome. He said that he was glad to have business there, for he wanted to see for himself what things were really like. He was driving in his one-horse sleigh, without any particular impression in his mind at all, until he crossed what was called the old canal, a place about a mile from the town. He said as soon as he crossed the canal, a strange impression came over him, awe so deep that he could not shake it. He felt as if God permeated the whole atmosphere. He said that this feeling increased the whole way, until he

came into the village. He stopped at Mr. Franklin's hotel, and the stable-man came and took his horse. He observed, he said, that the stable-man looked just like he himself felt—as if he were afraid to speak. He went into the hotel and found the gentleman there with whom he had business. He said that they were both so obviously shaken that they could hardly attend to business. He reported that several times in the course of the short time he was there, he had to rise from the table abruptly and go to the window and look away, trying to divert his attention to keep from weeping. He saw that everyone else appeared to feel just as he did. Such awe, such solemnness, such a state of things he had never had any conception of before. He quickly concluded his business and returned to Utica—but (as he said later) never to speak lightly of the Spirit's work in Rome again. A few weeks later in Utica, when Finney traveled to that town, he himself was converted.”<sup>1</sup>

This kind of power is a sovereign work of God in an area. Likewise, God, in His sovereign way, comes to individuals. In the passage we are looking at now, the Lord is talking about the coming of the Spirit to them and to us as individuals. Jesus said in verse seven that He would send the Spirit “to you.” The unbeliever will witness the Spirit's presence in the life of the believer and they will be convinced or convicted of their sin. They might not always admit their thoughts of conviction, but the Spirit does use the witness and the manner of life of the believer.

[Share your stories with one another of how you were impacted by the life of a believer in Christ.](#)

1) The first thing that the Spirit does is to convict the world of sin. Notice that the word *sin* is not in the plural. It is not individual sins that are mentioned, but of the sin of unbelief in the Son's finished work on the cross as a substitute for you and as you. When a man or woman stands in the judgment court of God at the end of his or her life, there will be one question that will be asked, “What did you do with the free gift of forgiveness for sin and the person of the Lord Jesus Christ?” Did you repent (turn around from your sin) and believe (wholeheartedly trust) in what was accomplished at the cross for you? The sin of unbelief is extremely serious and will send many to an eternity without God. **He that has the Son has life, and he that has not the Son of God does not have life (1 John 5:12).**

2) The second work of the Spirit is to convict the world as to righteousness, because Christ is going to the Father (Verse 10). When Christ returned to the Father, the Bible tells us that His ministry as a High Priest was to credit to our account His righteousness that He had won for us at the cross. **But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God (Hebrews 10:12).** To sit is a picture of a completed work. This righteousness that convicts men without Christ is an imputed righteousness that is given to a man at their conversion to Christ. What do we mean by imputed righteousness? What in the world does that big word mean? The word, “impute” means “to pass to one's account, to count over.” It means that Jesus places His

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<sup>1</sup> Autobiography of Charles G. Finney, published by Fleming H. Revel Company.

righteousness to our spiritual bank account when we trust upon Him for salvation. We are given the righteousness of Christ as a gift:

God made **him who had no sin to be sin for us**, so that in him we might become the **righteousness of God** (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The Lord Jesus is saying that when the Holy Spirit comes upon the disciples, the Spirit's presence on them and in them will be seen as a righteousness that those apart from Christ are hungry for. A Christian's right standing before God is very convicting to an unbeliever. This was the righteousness that Saul/Paul viewed on the face of Stephen when his face shone as an angel (Acts 6:15). The glory and righteousness of God was showing on his face in the midst of persecution.

3) The third work of the Holy Spirit is to convict or convince the world of judgment. There is coming a time of judgment when things will be put right in this world. The Spirit's coming will remind the world of men of an accounting as to their lives in this world (Romans 14:12). But why does the Lord add the phrase, "...because the prince of this world now stands condemned?" (Verse 11). This is a very similar statement to what Jesus said earlier, <sup>31</sup>Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out (John 12:31).

Who is the prince of this world that Jesus is referring to in this passage? Why would he stand condemned? What was about to happen to the prince of this world?

### **Satan Judged at the Cross**

We all know that we were bought with a price at the cross (1 Corinthians 6:20); the precious blood of Christ being the redemption payment that set us free from Satan's dominion, but there was more that happened there. The question we are seeking to answer is how was Satan judged at the cross?

When Jesus was being tempted by the devil in the desert, Satan took Christ to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me" (Matthew 4:8). How could Satan offer something to Christ that was not his to offer? The scripture is very clear that the Earth is the Lord's (Psalm 24:1). Jesus never disputed the claim by Satan that dominion over the Earth was his. In fact, in two other places, Jesus upheld Satan's legal claim by calling Satan "the prince of this world" (John 12:31 and 14:30).

Satan managed to gain legal rule and dominion over the Earth in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve made a choice to obey Satan rather than God. From the beginning God had given ruler ship and dominion to man:

<sup>26</sup>Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them **rule** over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, **over all the earth**, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." <sup>27</sup>So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and

female he created them. <sup>28</sup>God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. **Rule** over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (Genesis 1:26-28 Emphasis mine).

We became subservient to Satan and gave him the dominion over the earth that God had given us from the beginning. The Hebrew word, *radah*, translated with our English word "rule," means to "rule over or subdue."<sup>2</sup> King David, speaking by the Spirit, says something very similar:

<sup>3</sup>When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, <sup>4</sup>what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? <sup>5</sup>You made him a little lower than the **heavenly beings** and **crowned him with glory and honor**. <sup>6</sup>You made him **ruler** over the works of your hands; **you put everything under his feet** (Psalm 8:3-6 Emphasis mine).

The Hebrew word *mashal*, translated with the English word "ruler" in Psalm 8, verse 6, indicates that Adam, and us as his descendants, are God's managers, governors or stewards over the earth. *Mashal* means to "rule, reign, govern, have dominion over and manage."<sup>3</sup> Man was different from the rest of the created beings due to being crowned with glory and honor and made the ruler over the Earth. He alone was created in the image of God and could rule with grace and true justice.

<sup>16</sup>The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has **given** to man (Psalm 115:16 Emphasis mine).

Man gave away his right and dominion to rule into the hands of Satan at the Fall in the Garden of Eden. Satan, with impunity, could say to Christ at the temptation, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to" (Luke 4:6). Satan was not tempting Jesus with something that he did not have, he was offering Jesus something that was in his hands to use as leverage. He sought to tempt Christ to bypass the cross by bowing down to him, and acting outside of the Father's will.

This is why the redemption of the earth had to come through a man, because the earth had been given to Adam's race and only one of Adam's race could win it back. Man was the trustee of the earth. Satan could legally do anything he wanted to any of Adam's progeny (descendants), because they had become slaves of Satan due to Adam's choice to obey Satan rather than God. All it took was one act of disobedience. A man had to be found whom Satan had no claim to. That's why Christ had to be born of a virgin. It is no wonder that the concept of the Virgin birth is also under attack and something that the enemy wants to refute as foolish. It is an important element in the Redemption story. The Messiah, the Christ, had to be one of Adam's race but He could

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<sup>2</sup> Key Word Study Bible, AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, TN. Page 1550.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, Page 1530.

not be tainted by sin, otherwise He would have been owned and dominated by Satan, having Adam's nature. Christ was 100% man but 100% God as well, being conceived of the Holy Spirit. Satan therefore, had no claim on the innocent Christ, due to Jesus not having Adam's DNA passed down to Him. What I am saying is that when Satan took it upon himself to take Jesus to the cross, for the first time under divine law he became a murderer because Jesus was completely innocent, having never sinned. Judgment was pronounced upon him at the cross. Every man that makes Christ's death his own by believing and trusting in His death to be the payment for their sin, is made righteous before God. Eternal justice was satisfied at the cross. In the courts of heaven, Satan was and is legally condemned as a murderer, because he had no right to kill Jesus due to His sinless life.

<sup>14</sup>Since the children have flesh and blood, **he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—**<sup>15</sup>and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15).

Satan and his demons do not want you to understand the full implications of the verses above. Certainly they did not understand why God allowed the evil one and his evil fallen angels to crucify Christ.

<sup>8</sup>None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8).

Who are the rulers of this age? It certainly was not the chief priests, Pharisee's and leaders of Israel who are implicated in the death of Christ. They were but pawns under the influence of demonic evil forces. I would have loved to see Satan's reaction when Christ gave up His Spirit and descended to the lower regions of Hades. We know He took the keys of death and of hell out of the enemy's hand:

<sup>17</sup>When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. <sup>18</sup>I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And **I hold the keys of death and Hades** (Revelation 1:17-18).

The cross of Christ was the judgment of Satan but also our deliverance from his clutches. This was what Jesus was telling the disciples as they wept, that He would be seated at the right hand of the Father and His obedience to die as the sacrificial lamb of God would bring deliverance for all that would take His death as their own.

### **The Spirit's Work in the Believer**

There are three aspects of the Spirit's work in the life of the believer. 1) He will guide believers into all the truth. 2) He will tell us what is to come 3) He will glorify Christ.

1) First, He will guide us into all truth (John 16:13).

Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all the truth. Do you experience this happening in your life? Share what this looks like. How does it happen?

Truth is not something that man discovers; it is something that the Holy Spirit reveals. Truth exists apart from us, but if we have a heart to learn, the Spirit will reveal God's truth. There is an accountability that comes with truth, though. Truth revealed to us is something that God expects that we should live out. The more of the truth that is revealed to you by the Spirit and put to work in your life, the more you will embody Christ or put on Christ or mature in Him.

2) He will tell us what is to come. This was what Jesus was doing with the 11 disciples that night, telling them what was ahead, so that when persecution happened they would know that they were still in God's will. **7Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets (Amos 3:7).** Scripture, if we will dig deep with an open heart, has spoken much about what is still in the future. I do believe that the Lord is restoring the prophetic ministry in these days, but we should be very careful listeners to use the plumb line of the scriptures to see that what is built is according to the pattern of the scriptures. We are living in days that the Spirit is opening our eyes more and more to the prophetic scriptures in order to prepare the Church for the days of persecution that I believe are ahead.

3) He will glorify Christ. I have found that the more I seek to teach on the Lord Jesus Christ and the work He has accomplished, the more the Spirit will bless that work. Teachers and preachers, Small Group leaders and all who seek to serve the Lord, make much of Jesus Christ and put Him before the people and you will find that the Holy Spirit's stamp of approval and His presence will be on your work, because His passion is to glorify the Lord Jesus. Read the gospels often and saturate yourself with the teaching of Christ.

I have said this before, but it is worth repeating; drawing others to Christ is the mission of the Holy Spirit. We just need to be His messengers. Jesus is still speaking to us, just as He was when He was with His disciples. He promised them:

**"... the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you" (John 16:15).**

So be a willing vessel, store up His words in your heart, and simply share who Jesus is to you and what He has done in your life. Remember that you may be the only Jesus some will ever encounter. Phil Keaggy wrote a song called Portrait, taken from a poem written by Beatrice Clelland entitled, "Portrait of a Christian." Let the truth of this sink in to your heart and inspire you to draw near to God, let His Holy Spirit draw near to you and help you to simply be His witness.

*To me 'twas not the truth you taught,  
to you so clear, to me so dim.*

*But when you came to me,  
you brought a sense of Him.*

*And from His light He beckons me,  
and from your lips His love is shed.  
Til I lose sight of you and see the Christ instead.*

*Is it a beautiful smile?  
A holy light upon your brow?  
Oh no, I felt His presence when you laughed just now.*

Prayer: Father, my prayer today is that your Spirit would come afresh to me. May the breath of the Spirit breathe on me and revive my spirit to walk in all your ways. Shine your light on my path and reveal more of Jesus to me. Amen!

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