

SORROW TURNS TO JOY / Sunday, March 15, 2015

Unifying Topic: THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

Lesson Text

I. *The Comforter's Work In The World (John 16:4-11)*

II. *The Comforter's Work In Believers (John 16:12-15)*

The Main Thought: Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. (**John 16:7**, KJV).

Unifying Principle: It may be difficult to maintain a direction in life when a mentor is lost. How do people find the resources to carry on when the strength and vision of someone close to them is no longer available? Jesus promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit would be as real a presence to them as His physical presence was while He lived with them on earth.

Lesson Aim: To explain the various functions of the Holy Spirit.

Life Aim: To encourage followers of Christ to live with a better understanding of the peace the Holy Spirit provided.

HISTORY:

Chapter 16 shows Jesus' continuation to prepare the disciples for His departure. The chapter is divided into three parts. First, in verses 1-4, there is a reminder of PERSECUTION. In verses 5-15, there is a reminder of PROVISION for that persecution. And in verses 16-23, we have a readjustment of PERSPECTIVE.

16:1-3 Jesus Warns of Persecution

16:1 **These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.** Jesus had forewarned the disciples about the hatred they would encounter in the world. He tells them that as they were loving one another and bearing fruit, the world would hate them. When you are bearing witness of Jesus Christ, one of two reactions will occur: people will accept Jesus, or people will reject Him. There is no middle ground. Jesus said, *Matt. 12:30 "He who is not with Me is against Me..."* Persecution involves such things as:

- Having one's faith, position, and ministry questioned.
- Being accused, abused, talked about, and plotted against.
- Being denied rights.
- Being silenced, not allowed to worship or serve.
- Being removed from service.
- Being tried and imprisoned; tortured and killed.

What was ahead for them was persecution.

16:2 **They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.** The Jews, zealous for the law of God, would vehemently oppose and oppress Christians. Remember the apostle Paul testified of his life as a Pharisee (Acts 26:9-11). They were killing Christians, honestly believing that they were doing God's work. But they were deceived because they didn't truly know God.

POINT:

Unbelieving Jewish people would think they were doing God a favor by kicking Christian believers out of the synagogues and even killing them. The whole reason Jesus told them in advance is so that they would be kept from stumbling. On this earth, God's house is full of people who have not really committed their lives to God. They do not know Him personally—not in a real intimate way. Therefore, the believer who truly takes a stand for God and His righteousness is sometimes opposed and persecuted by those within the church. It is a terrible tragedy when persecution takes place in the walls of God's house.

16:3 **And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.** Jesus gives one reason that underlines all other reasons for persecution—they have not known the Father nor Jesus; and people reject

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

what they don't know about. They may claim to know God, but it's their own idea of God, not who He really is. Religionists are deceived in their concept of God and in their understanding of Christ. They reject Christ; rejecting His claim to be the Son of God, the One who has existed by the side of God throughout all eternity. They look upon Christ only as a man, a good man, yes, but only a man. The problem is that they want no God; they want no Lord that demands total self-denial and allegiance—no God other than themselves and their own imaginations. They want the right and freedom to seek their own desires instead of the demands of the supreme Lord.

LESSON:

John 16:4-11 The Comforter's Work In The World

16:4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. The believer must expect persecution (these things) for it was foretold; maybe not at their first beginning together. There was no need because Jesus was there with them to protect them. But there will come a time when one must remember what Jesus said: that He would be persecuted. Remembering keeps the believer from being caught off guard and stumbling. Even when they couldn't sort it all out that night, they would remember what He said when the events are happening. As we saw in John 14, the Spirit also helps by teaching us and bringing the Word of God to our remembrance.

16:5 But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?— So Jesus repeated that He was going back to the Father, who had sent Him. Each of them were so absorbed in their own sorrow and confusion, that no one asked where He was going.

16:6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Knowing of His departure certainly caused the disciples grief. The believer is not to wallow around in self-pity and sorrow, moaning over being persecuted. His mind and thoughts are to be on God and heaven.

16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. Jesus was leaving, but He was sending them the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. How many times did your parents tell you they were doing something for your own good when it hurt you? This was the same kind of situation for the disciples. When Jesus went away, He would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, which would be better for them—for He would be in each of them at the same time. The Holy Spirit can be everywhere at once, while Jesus was limited to wherever His body was. Jesus lets them know that they will have a Helper when He departs. The sorrow they were experiencing shall turn into joy for the ministry of the Spirit will go farther!

¹Helper

First of all, the Spirit is sent as a Helper. How does He help us? Rom. 8:26-27 tells us...The Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for {us}with groanings too deep for words and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. Second, the Spirit helps by interceding in prayer for us, because we don't always know the Will of God.

It was expedient for Jesus to leave—so the Comforter could come:

1. Since Jesus departed, we now have a glorified and exalted Lord.
2. Since Jesus departed, we now have an Intercessor before the throne of God.
3. Since Jesus departed, we now have the presence of the Holy Spirit with us at all times.
4. Since Jesus departed, we now have a real gospel to proclaim.
5. Since Jesus departed, we now have the world-wide work of the Holy Spirit;
 - Convicting and convincing (Jh.16:8-11); helping and guiding believers (Jh.16:12-13); glorifying Christ (Jh.16:14-15).

16:8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:— Jesus explains the three-fold conviction of the Spirit: 1) of sin, 2) of righteousness, and 3) of judgment. The Spirit is the prosecuting attorney in God's courtroom, charged with showing unsaved human beings their lost condition. To "*convict*" means to show, to expose, and to unmask.

16:9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;— Convictor Of Sin

The Spirit convicts the world concerning sin. In Hebrews 3:7-8 therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, TODAY IF YOU HEAR MY VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS... The Holy Spirit's main job in the world is to convict people in the world of sin. Do I mean sins like drinking, smoking, cussing, etc.? Yes and No. While the Holy Spirit does convict believers of sins from the inside out, the Holy Spirit's conviction of the world's sin is one sin:

- John 16:9 truth concerning sin: because they do not believe in Me; The Holy Spirit convicts people of this one sin—their unbelief in Jesus Christ. We get so caught up trying to show the drunkard his sin in drinking, the adulteress her sin in adultery. We try to legislate morality so that people will somehow realize that, "*Hey, what you're doing is sin! You shouldn't do this anymore.*" But that is completely backwards! The Spirit convicts; does the work in the unbelievers in the world of a single sin: the rejection of Jesus Christ!
- Mark 3:28-29 "*Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.*" All sins except one will be forgiven. There's really only one sin that the unbelieving world has to contend with: the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit when He convicts the world of their unbelief in Jesus.
- Matt. 12:32 "And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him... God didn't say, "Okay, that's it. I've had enough of a person, burn him!" No, He continued to have His Spirit work on that person, convicting him of the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ. This is why blasphemy of the Spirit is the only unforgivable sin - because when you ultimately reject His constant conviction of sin, you are rejecting your need for a Savior from the penalty of sin. And when you die without ever having repented from your sin and receiving Jesus Christ, you're doomed to eternal separation from God into outer darkness.

16:10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;—Convictor Of Righteousness

Not only does the Spirit convict the world of the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ, but He is also the Convictor of Righteousness. Jesus says,

- John 16:10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; Jesus was the living example of righteousness in the world while He was in the world. But now it is the Holy Spirit's job. Paul said to the Thessalonians that the Spirit was restraining evil in the world. He continues to convict the world of righteousness. How does He do it? He does it as He works through the church - we live righteously, shining the light of godliness, holiness, and righteousness in the world.
- Matt. 5:14-16 "*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do {men} light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*" The Holy Spirit, working through us, convicts the world of righteousness. They no longer see Jesus walking the earth, because he went to His Father, but they see us, walking in the Spirit, living righteously.

16:11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged— Convictor Of Judgment

Thirdly, the Spirit is the Convictor of Judgment. As He, the Spirit of Truth is convicting the world of the sin of unbelief in Jesus and convicting the world of righteousness by demonstrating it through us, and He is also convicting

the world that the devil, the prince of this world they're following has a sure eternal place in the lake of fire. The devil speaks lies to the minds of people in the world; while the Spirit speaks truth to convict the hearts of judgment. If you're a child of the devil, you're going to spend eternity in the same place the devil is going. "Have you ever wondered why so many people are looking forward to hell? Oh yeah, you're saying, hell's gonna be one big party with all my buddies. We're gonna surf the waves on the lake of fire." It's not like they haven't thought about hell - it's that they've completely hardened their hearts against the Spirit convicting them of the judgment that's coming. If they continue on this path Zechariah wrote,

- Zech. 7:11-12 "But they refused to pay attention, and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears from hearing. And they made their hearts {like} flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets; therefore great wrath came from the LORD of hosts."

The Spirit convicts, and people either choose to receive Jesus Christ, or they harden their hearts into flint.

John 16:12-15 The Comforter's Work In Believers

16:12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. After describing the Spirit's work in the world, Jesus now elaborates on the Spirit's work with regard to the disciples--believers. Jesus had just an hour or two left before He would be arrested. He's dropping all this stuff into their laps, hoping that they'll receive it and not be overwhelmed by it. But there's so much to say, so little time, and such weak faith in these disciples. So He says, "I can't tell you everything now - you'd just freak out. So I'll let the Holy Spirit teach you and guide you into all this truth." The disciples were not ready spiritually to accept all Jesus wanted to tell them. It would be shared later.

16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. The Spirit of Truth would guide (lead) them into a complete knowledge of all truth. What the Spirit hears, He will speak.

1. The Holy Spirit will come!
2. The Holy Spirit guides by leading into all truth. He does not speak of Himself only the truth He hears. **The church must be built on this proclamation: the rock-solid foundation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The true test of a Spirit-filled church is this: Is Jesus the main focus? Is Jesus the main attraction? Is Jesus the main event? When the Spirit is truly moving and working, He is not the focus, Jesus is!**
3. The Holy Spirit guides by speaking the truth. Jesus would share with them later through the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the One who knows the infirmities and the needs of men. He knows by personal experience. Therefore, He is the One who is appointed by God to instruct the Spirit in His guiding ministry.
4. The Holy Spirit will show us things to come. The Spirit also discloses to us what is to come. We have the sure Word of Prophecy in the Scriptures.
 - 2Pet. 1:21 ...men, moved by the Holy Spirit, spoke from God. We also have seen the Spirit speak through prophecy to disclose future events, such as happened in the book of Acts:
 - Acts 11:27-28 ...some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and {began} to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world... The Spirit has also warned us what will happen in these last days:
 - 1Tim. 4:1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons. So the Spirit's ministry includes disclosing things to come.

16:14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

5. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus. When people think of the Holy Spirit working in believer's lives, they usually

think of the paranormal: people speaking in tongues, prophesying, miraculous happenings. But He is first and foremost the Spirit of Truth. John tells us,

- 1John 5:6 "*And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth.*" The Spirit is not weird and wacky. He's not out of control like some radioactive cloud falling on people and making them quake and shake. He's the Spirit of Truth. He bears witness of all truth. Now maybe you've been to churches where the Spirit is the main focus, the main attraction, the main thing. But Jesus says,

- John 16:14 "*He shall glorify Me...*"
- John 14:26 "*(He will) bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*"
- John 15:26 "*...He will bear witness of Me.*"

The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ and only Christ. He receives of Christ and shows (declares) it to believers. This means He receives and declares only what Christ is; only what Christ did; and only what Christ said. The Holy Spirit was sent in Jesus' Name to proclaim Jesus alone. A Spirit-filled church is a **Jesus-focused** church.

16:15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Jesus lets us know that all things that the Father have are His and the Father shall take what's His and show it to the believers.

SUMMARY:

Jesus spoke many things to His disciples, but not of persecution in the beginning, because He was with them and there was no cause for them to be alarmed. But there were certain things He wanted them to remember when the right time came. Now Jesus had to go away to the One who sent Him. No one asked where He was going, but He saw the sorrow all over their faces, and filling their hearts. However, He has to tell them the truth. It was beneficial for them that He went away because if He didn't, the Comforter couldn't come. He had to depart for a higher reason; for when He comes He has a job to do: reprove the world of sin; of righteousness; and of judgment. People didn't believe in Jesus. People wouldn't see Him anymore because He went back to the Father, but their way of righteousness would be exposed; conviction would occur. And people believing in the prince of this world, the devil, would come to their judgment just as he is to come. The Comforter, the Holy Spirit will do the work here on earth to convict the world of sin (**vv.4-11**).

Now everywhere a man goes the *Holy Spirit* is with him.

1. The Holy Spirit will convict men of sin (v.9).
2. The Holy Spirit will convince men of righteousness (v.10).
3. The Holy Spirit will convict men of judgment (v.11).

Jesus still had many things to communicate to them but He knew they couldn't tolerate them now. But He knew that the Comforter is Spirit of Truth and He will come. He knew that the Spirit of Truth would guide them in all truth. He knew that the Spirit of Truth would not speak of Himself, but whatever He hears from Jesus. He knew the Spirit of Truth would show us future things to come. And He knew the Spirit of Truth would glorify Jesus, for whatever He received from Jesus, He would show us. His great work is to bring God's truth to all men. It is our job to witness; it is the *Spirit's* job to convict (**vv.12-15**).