

## John 16 – The work of the Holy Spirit

In past 3 times I've preached on

1. **Walking with an abundance mindset** - seeing possibilities when our circumstances show only despair. Seeing God's ability to breathe life where we only see death.
2. **Learning Contentment** - swap out jealousy, longing, and striving for "something else" into thankfulness, trust, and striving for Christ
3. **Lifting up Holy Hands** - there is nothing more powerful in your life than the real connection between you and God by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Today I am going to continue the progression through the book of John, and talk about the work of the Holy Spirit. John 16 is part of a long discourse by Jesus which is all in preparation for the events soon to come for his disciples. His arrest, persecution, and crucifixion.

- John 14 Jesus talks about what it means to love him, and that is to obey his commands.
- John 15 Jesus talks about the vine and the branches. The idea that we are servants and friends of Christ, and so we can expect to be treated in this world the same way that Jesus was
- In John 16 Jesus continues to give reassurances to his disciples about what is about to happen, and also to point them toward the future.

### Remember what Jesus has said

3 times in this chapter Jesus says "I have told you". He is reminding them of what is easy to forget. Did you ever notice that we are all selective listeners? We often tune out what we don't want to hear. And perhaps because Jesus was telling these guys things they probably didn't want to hear he kept coming back to it? Starting out in John 16:

*John 16:1-4*

*"All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. 2 They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. 3 They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. 4 I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you.*

Knowing the word of God is essential to us not going astray. Jesus keeps repeating the basic warning "the world doesn't know me, doesn't like me. They aren't going to like you either. Don't be surprised." Yet we so often get angry when the world acts worldly, and it messes with our plans.

It is essential for us to stay focused on the fact that this world is not our home. This life isn't meant to be easy. Jesus sums up this chapter with one of the most obvious, but extremely important promises.

**John 16:33** *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

Life will be hard. Jesus promised this. But in that trouble he will give you peace – if you abide in him as it said in chapter 15. And we have to stand in faith to have this peace. It is the peace of knowing that Jesus has overcome the world. Not that he is going to...we must realize it as an accomplished part of history.

## In God's economy, hard times come before good

*John 16:16-22*

*"In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me."*

*17 Some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,' and 'Because I am going to the Father'?" 18 They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what he is saying."*

*19 Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, "Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me'?" 20 I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. 21 A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. 22 So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.*

Again, Jesus tells of his coming death and resurrection. He is trying to make the coming blow be not quite as surprising by fully acknowledging how painful it will be. And I think it is important to realize how often, in the things of God, true joy only comes after pain and suffering.

The analogy Jesus gives here is of the pain of child-birth, which Jesus calls anguish.

There are also many places where Jesus points to how true life only comes through the death of your self-will. The dying of a seed in the ground to become a plant. This is how it works. You must go through the hard times to get to the good times. I believe that all of the pain of this life is preparation for the next life where we will be fully alive in Christ. Not this muted world of gray and black but a true full-color world of life in presence of Jesus forever.

Grief first → joy that no one can take away

For all of us who have some kind of grief. Some kind of pain. Some kind of anguish. Know that in Christ – joy is coming. Do not give up, and do not turn away, because then your pain will just

become more pain. But rather remain faithful to follow Christ and allow his life to work in you so that one day you will rejoice. And once that day comes, no one can take that joy away.

Think of the disciples. Who were soon to abandon Jesus and leave him all alone. These same men, after having their grief turned to true joy when they saw the risen Christ all were persecuted and some martyred for their faith. But because the joy of knowing that Christ had conquered death, and that they would too, made it a joy that could not be taken away even by death.

## The work of the Holy Spirit

Now let's jump back up, as Jesus reveals more about the Holy Spirit.

### **John 16:5-7**

*"Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'" 6 Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. 7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.*

This had to be such a confusing thing for the disciples to hear. How is it possible that Jesus leaving was "good"? How many of us has wished at some time or another to be able to get into a time machine and go back to when Jesus was walking on the earth? To see him with your own eyes and touch him with your own hands.

Yet Jesus – the Truth – tells us that having the Holy Spirit is better than having him in person. Wow. So what are some ways that this is better?

- **The Holy Spirit is not limited to a certain physical location**

*Ps 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.*

- **The Holy Spirit is not external to us, but inside of us**

*Rom 8:11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.*

- **The Holy Spirit empowers us to do the things that Jesus did**

*John 14:12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.*

*1 Cor 12:11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.*

## The work of the Holy Spirit in the World

### **John 16:8-11**

*When he comes, he will convict<sup>1</sup> the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; 10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; 11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.*

This passage I think gets misused a bit by Christians. I think when we hear this version and the word convict we have this more squishy idea of conviction as a feeling of the heart. But this word has a more robust and powerful meaning to it. **It means to convince, tell a fault, rebuke, reprove.** So for example, when John the Baptist confronted Herod he “rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done”. And it is geared toward a specific issue – **unbelief**. That is the crux of every sin and really is the only thing we ever need to preach about. All sin is the result of unbelief. We may think it is about the flesh pulling us to chose what is pleasing, but what is that but unbelief? We are choosing to believe there is something better than what God has provided or the path which he is leading us in. And what is the point of this? To point people away from judgment and to repentance.

A great example of this work of the Holy Spirit is in Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. He presents a case based on evidence and facts.

#### **Acts 2:22-39**

*"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.*

He quotes the scriptures to them to make his point:

*25 David said about him: "'I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, 27 because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'*

He then points to the truth again:

*29 "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the*

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<sup>1</sup> NT:1651 elegcho (el-eng'-kho); of uncertain affinity; to confute, admonish: KJV - convict, convince, tell a fault, rebuke, reprove.

*grave, nor did his body see decay. 32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. 33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,*

*"The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand 35 until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." ' 36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."*

Now that is a convicting argument isn't it? And there was a strong response.

*37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"*

*38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." 40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*

So look at how the Holy Spirit convicted the world through Peter that day:

- Peter, in his preaching pointed to the fact that the people had rejected the son of God.
- He pointed to the evidence that Jesus was the son of God – miracles, the resurrection
- He called their attention to the gifts of the Holy Spirit being manifest that day as evidence of Jesus being exalted
- He called them to repent to escape the coming judgment

Too often I think we soft-pedal the gospel, that God has a wonderful plan for your life! Which he does! But notice that Peter doesn't start with that but rather ends with that (you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit). But he starts by pointing to the Lordship of Christ compared to the sinfulness of people.

There are others who have advocated this kind of evangelism, where we use questions from the ten commandments to show people that though they think they are "basically good" that they are in fact sinners. Then you can point out the need for the savior.

**Now, I just want to repeat verse 11 before moving on.**

*16:11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.*

This is important to remember. Satan IS defeated. Not he will be one day, he IS now condemned. Look back at

**John 12:31** Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. 32 But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." 33 He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

Without question scripture teaches that the defeat of Satan happened at the cross. When Jesus was lifted up to die, it was the end of devil's unfettered reign on earth. The devil still has influence when he is invited in, but has been driven out. He has been defeated. The devil is ... a has been.

**Col 2:15** And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Now you might ask – if the devil has been judged and disarmed, why is there so much apparent influence in the world of evil?

*This binding does **not** result in the **total inactivity** of Satan; rather it enforces a complete control of his power by Christ. The same restriction does **not** result in the **total inactivity** of Satan; rather it enforces a complete control of his power by Christ.*<sup>2</sup>

Christ is reigning now and defeating all enemies except death in this period of time. Satan is completely defeated in the life of every person who submits himself to Christ.

## The work of the Holy Spirit in the Church

*John 16:12-15*

*"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all 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. 14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.*

This chapter starts with Jesus reminding them about what he has told them. But now he tells the disciples...there is too much to tell.

Think about all that changed after the resurrection – yet Jesus remained only 40 days physically on the earth before ascending into heaven, sitting at the right hand of God and then sending the Holy Spirit. Now those first apostles, empowered by the Holy Spirit, had a lot to learn. The whole new covenant was to be discovered with the idea of a righteousness that comes by faith alone through Christ alone.

Note in this passage the primary actions of the Holy Spirit – to hear and to speak. Making Christ known to man so that Jesus is glorified.

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<sup>2</sup> He shall have dominion, Gary Demar

## Direct access to God

*John 16:23-33*

23 In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

25 "Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. 26 In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. 27 No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. 28 I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

In Christ, we do not live by a religion that simply gets us through life. We have a relationship with the living God that gives us direct access to him! We don't have to live life in a way that is joyless, but rather as we live with the knowledge and experience that our Father in heaven LOVES US. There is no more powerful revelation than that – to fully grasp that the Father himself loves you. It makes everything else make sense. When you know that God sees you. When you know that God is thinking about you. I shared this last month how the revelation of God's thoughts and love toward me changes your perspective completely.

### Finishing up – Take Heart!

29 Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. 30 Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God."

31 "You believe at last!" Jesus answered. 32 "But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.

33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart!<sup>3</sup> I have overcome the world."

This phrase "Take Heart" means "have courage". Jesus said this to the disciples when he came to them walking on the water they thought he was a ghost. Paul said this the ship captain in the storm when the Spirit showed him they would survive. Jesus is saying to us – have courage! It's OK! I've already won! You might not see the full effects of my victory yet, but they ARE coming. They have been bought and paid for and you be sure of it. The devil is defeated – he is a "has been". Persevere through the pain because joy is coming!

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<sup>3</sup> NT:2293 tharseo (thar-seh'-o); from NT:2294; to have courage: KJV - be of good cheer (comfort). Compare NT:2292