

The Work of the Holy Spirit

(John 16:7-15)

Let me begin with a little context from chapter 14 of the Book of John. In chapter 14, we learn that Jesus did not want his disciples to be anxious. Here in chapter 16, he doesn't want them to go astray or defect.

The disciples can expect persecution and expulsion from the synagogue (v. 2), but this is no cause for despair. As in **John 15:26-27**, they are to take heart; the Holy Spirit will co-testify with them to a hate-filled world; the Counselor will bring conviction to the world (v. 8). In fact, Jesus says his ascension is to our advantage, because he will send the Holy Spirit to us from heaven (Acts 2:33), by whose coming we will be greatly advantaged.

The clearest revelation of the Holy Spirit is given by our Lord himself. He has already revealed who the person of the Holy Spirit is in John 14. Now, he reveals the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comforts and helps believers. Jesus said a surprising thing in **verse 7**, "It is for your good that I am going away." It was for the supporter's good (profit, advantage) that Jesus would

leave the world. Note the extra weight and emphasis Jesus gave to the fact: “I tell you the truth.” It may be difficult for a person to see and understand, for it seems that we would be much better off if Jesus was here physically and bodily. Some people even cry out for his presence, for some sight, some vision, some dream of him. But Jesus said that it was best that he leave and not be physically present. Why? There is one supreme reason: If he had not left, the Holy Spirit would not have come. The believer is *better off* with the presence of the Holy Spirit than he is with the presence of Jesus.

Now note. How can such a statement be made? How can the believer be better off with the Holy Spirit than with the physical, bodily presence of Jesus? **First**, since Jesus departed, we now have a *glorified and exalted Lord*. We have a Lord who rules and reigns and controls all: who is able to fulfill all His promises and meet our desperate need for life—life that is both abundant and eternal.

Second, since Jesus departed, we now have an *Intercessor* before the very throne of God. We have a

Person who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses—all because he was tempted in every way just as we were. **Third**, since Jesus departed, we now have the presence of the Holy Spirit with us at all times. Jesus, in his human body, could only be in one place at a time; but the Holy Spirit, who is Spirit, is able to be with all believers at the same time no matter where they are. Which is what we are told in **John 14:16**, “And I will ask the Father, and will give you another Counselor to be with you forever.”

Fourth, since Jesus departed, we now have a real gospel to proclaim, the gospel of the risen and exalted Lord who is able to give eternal life to every person who calls upon him. And **fifth**, since Jesus departed, we now have the worldwide work of the Holy Spirit. His work of convicting and convincing the world, of helping and guiding believers, and of glorifying Christ.

Let’s take a look at each of these items. First, the Holy Spirit convicts and convinces the world. The word **convict** means both to **reprove** and to **convince** a person. Convict means to prick a person’s heart until he senses

and knows he is guilty: knows he has done wrong or failed to do right. Convince means to hammer and drive at a person's heart until he knows the fact is true. The Holy Spirit's convicting means to prove the world wrong about three things: sin, righteousness, and judgment. We see evidence of this ministry on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), where those who heard Peter's sermon came to him and were pierced through the heart.

The Spirit convicts **first** about sin, because people have not believed in Jesus (**John 16:9**). This unbelief is the most cataclysmic sin and the only one that, if continued, cannot be forgiven, since Jesus alone is the source of such forgiveness. Which is what we can read in **Romans 3:23**, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Second, the Spirit convicts with regard to righteousness (v. 10). The Jews rejected Jesus as a pretender, deeming him unrighteous because only a wicked person would be hanged on a tree to suffer God's curse (Deuteronomy 21:23; Galatians 3:13). But God vindicated Jesus as his righteous Servant, raising him from the dead to sit as his

right hand. Note how the sermon at Pentecost contrasts what God's people did to Jesus and what God did (Acts 2:22-24). The Spirit convicts men of their wrong view of Jesus, and of what true righteousness is, when the gospel is proclaimed. Which is what it says in **Galatians 3:11**, "Clearly no one is justified before God by the law because, 'The righteous will live by faith'."

Third, the Spirit convicts in relation to *judgment*, "because the prince of this world now stands condemned" (**John 16:11**). It was Satan who was judged at the cross, not Jesus. Satan has no hold on Jesus (John 12:31; 14:30) because Jesus never earned death—he never sinned. As the coming judgment (for both Satan and man) is proclaimed, the Spirit convicts people and prepares them for salvation. Which is what we can read in **Romans 14:12**, "So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God."

The days in which we live are days of open-mindedness, days in which everything is tolerated, and everything is relative. We are postmodernists. However, the Holy Spirit continues to be active in proving to people how

wrong they are and pointing them to the only One who can set them right.

As disciples of Jesus, we are to be people of witness. We pray that as we witness, the Comforter will convict, so people will “repent and be baptized ... in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins” (Acts 2:38).

The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ and only Christ. Note that the Spirit “makes Christ known” and shows or declares it to believers. This means he reveals 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. He, is the Spirit of Truth, leads believers to Christ, who alone is the Truth. He did not come to proclaim a movement and message of his own, but to proclaim the movement and message of Christ. Which is what is tells us in **John 14:26**, “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

Note the phenomenal claim of Jesus. All that the Father has is His. He is the Son of God, the Son of the Father.

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Note another fact: Christ is declaring that there is perfect unity in the Godhead. All things of the Father are the things of the Son, of Jesus Christ Himself, and the things shown and declared by the Holy Spirit. Which is simply stated in **John 10:30**, “I and the Father are one.”

What are the **lessons** we can learn from this Scripture reading in John?

This Scripture reading from John teaches that Jesus’ departure and subsequent coming of the Holy Spirit are actually beneficial for believers. Jesus’ departure means that the disciples will receive the Holy Spirit who will help guide them into all truth. The Holy Spirit will also reveal

the truth about sin, righteousness, and judgment, leading people to recognize their need for salvation. The Holy Spirit will reveal the glory of Jesus and will empower believers to share that glory with the world. The Holy

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Spirit will lead believers to a deeper understanding of God's truth and will equip them to face challenges with courage and conviction. The Holy Spirit will empower believers to endure trials and tribulation, knowing that Jesus has overcome the world. And the Holy Spirit's guidance is a gift that encourages believers to seek a deeper relationship with God and to follow his will.

Please bow your heads as I pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the promise of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. We pray that you would guide us into all truth, helping us to understand your word and discern your will. We also pray that the Holy

Spirit would convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, as Jesus has said. May we be filled with the Holy Spirit, enabling us to glorify Jesus and share your message of love and salvation with others. We ask for the Holy Spirit's power to reveal your truths to us, and for wisdom to share

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those truths with a hurting and lost world. We pray all this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. **Amen.**