



Sermon Reflection Guide; John 16:4-11

1. Jesus says it is to our advantage that he leaves and the Holy Spirit come. In what way is this true?
2. Why do you think we are tempted to believe it would be easier for us to trust Christ if we could have met him face to face, rather than having the ministry of the Holy Spirit today?
3. Jesus tells us in John 16:8 that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to convict us. First, he says, the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin. In what ways have you experienced this and why is this the necessary first work of the Holy Spirit in our lives?
4. Second, the Holy Spirit convicts us about our counterfeit righteousness? Why is this needed and what would you say is most people's view of their own goodness?
5. Finally, Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit convicts us of the certainty of judgement. How does this ministry of the Holy Spirit compel us to trust by faith in Christ alone?

Sermon Summary

In verses 4-6 of John 16, Jesus begins to explain to the disciples what is about to happen to him, what is about to happen to them and why all this is going to happen. Jesus says that from the beginning he has known all of this but none of it has been important until now, and so he tells them "all these things". Jesus also points out that the disciples really do not care what is going to happen to Jesus but instead are filled with sorrow because of what they hear is going to happen to them. It is in this place of sorrow that Jesus continues to comfort his disciples by telling them about the work of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus begins by telling his disciples about *The Holy Spirit's advantage*. Jesus says in John 16:7, "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 go, I will send him to you." We are reminded of what we have already learned about the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Spirit is a divine person not merely an impersonal "force" or "power-source" that we tap into. Rather, the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father at the request of the Son, the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity coequal with God the Father and God the Son. Also, we see that the Holy Spirit is referred to in verse 7 as "The Helper". This word literally means, "to call alongside" so the Holy Spirit is the one who is sent alongside to help us, comfort us, and strengthen us for the fight.

Now we may ask ourselves, how is Jesus leaving and the Holy Spirit coming actually to our advantage? First, in Jesus' going away he accomplishes our redemption and the Holy Spirit applies that redemption to us. This is all a part of God the Father's plan of redemption. The Holy Spirit is sent to do the unique work of applying this redemption to us. Only the Holy Spirit can give us new hearts, only the Holy Spirit can use the Word of God to convict us of sin and save us, it is the Holy Spirit that grows us and sanctifies us as we mature in our relationship with God. Second, it is to our advantage because the Holy Spirit now dwells within every single Christian. This is something that Christ in His human form could never do. If he was in Jerusalem with John and Peter was in Galilee Jesus could not be with both John and Peter. However, the Holy Spirit is not limited in this way and actually indwells all Christians everywhere at the

same time! Calvin writes, “Far more advantageous and far more desirable is that presence of Christ, by which He communicates Himself to us through the grace and power of His Spirit, than if He were present before our eyes.” We are not worse of now that Jesus is at the right hand of God the Father and the Holy Spirit has come in power to indwell the hearts of all believers, rather as Jesus says, this is to our advantage.

Having explained the advantage of the Holy Spirit, Jesus now goes on to explain *The Holy Spirit’s ministry*. In verse 8 Jesus says, “⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:” Jesus says that part of the Holy Spirit’s ministry is to convict the world. This word, “convict” can also be translated as expose or reveal. So, Jesus says that the Holy Spirit comes to expose and convict us about three things; the guilt of sin, the need of righteousness and certainty judgement.

First, the Holy Spirit convicts the world about the guilt of sin. Jesus says in verse 9, “⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me;” Jesus tells us that one of the jobs of the Holy Spirit is to expose our sin. This is not a man-made guilt rather it is the weight of righteousness of a Holy God pressing down on us in such a way that we have no place to hide. Just like the Holy Spirit shines a light on the glory of Christ so too does the Holy Spirit shine a light on the depravity of our hearts. The Holy Spirit exposes not who we pretend to be but who we really are in our rebellion and iniquity. This is the first work of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life. And it must be a work of the Holy Spirit because without it we tend to believe that our sin is no big deal and ultimately harmless. However, the Bible never teaches this, Romans 6:23 says, “The wages of sin is death.” It is not harmless instead what we have earned and what we deserve because of our sin is eternal separation from God. This is what the Holy Spirit exposes to us.

Second, Jesus convicts the world of the need for righteousness. Jesus says in verse 10, “¹⁰ concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer;” There are two aspects of this revealing of righteousness. First, the Holy Spirit reveals Christ’s perfect righteousness and perfect sacrifice. Jesus’s returning to the Father and the sending of the Holy Spirit prove the Father’s acceptance of Jesus’s perfect life and death. Additionally, the Holy Spirit also convicts us in our need of this righteousness. Without the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives we tend to believe that our good deeds and just a little above average and enough for God to love and save us. However, the Bible never teaches this, Isaiah 64:6 says, “...and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment...” The Holy Spirit shows us that we have no righteousness of our own and that instead all we have is our sin which condemns us. This work of the Holy Spirit is designed to point us to Christ alone. To cling and trust in Christ’s perfect life, death and resurrection for the forgiveness of our sins.

Third, the Holy Spirit reveals to us the certainty of judgement. In verse 11, Jesus says, “¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” The Bible often refers to Satan as “the ruler of this world” and Jesus is saying that by his death on the cross Satan has been judged and defeated. If we doubt God’s judgement on all evil, then we should look to Satan’s judgement and defeat and realize God is just to judge all of our evil deeds and sin.

This passage is about conviction. It should bring about conviction in our lives. And this work of conviction is a work of grace. As Jesus says, it is to our advantage that the Holy Spirit comes and does this work of conviction! When God’s word is faithfully preached it will at times bring conviction of our sin and need for Christ. Praise God for this work of grace in our lives. May the Holy Spirit continue to work through the word of God in the hearts of the people of God that we may all the more see our sin and need for Christ.