

THE HOLY SPIRIT DOESN'T JUST WORK IN CHRISTIANS

John 16:1-15 - "I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. [2] They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. [3] And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. [4] But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you. [5] But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' [6] But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. [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. [8] And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: [9] concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; [10] concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; [11] concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. [12] I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. [13] When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. [14] He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. [15] All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

*"I have said all these things to you to **keep you from falling away**"(16:1).* As we saw in our last study, Jesus wants to leave His disciples in a place where they won't fall away when they discover the world will treat most of them exactly as it treated Him - **John 15:18** - *"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you."*

In today's text Jesus spells out in specific detail the particulars as to **how** this hatred of the world will manifest itself. In **verse 2** He reminds them of two things that will happen to many of them: *"They will **put you out of the synagogues**. Indeed, the hour is coming when **whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God**."*

So they will be **put out of the synagogues**. This shouldn't be surprising because they had already **seen** this happen to others who had given glory to Jesus. This is what happened to the man born blind, healed by Jesus - **John 9:22, 34** - *"His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue....[34]....They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out."*

Then Jesus told His disciples many of them would be **put to death**. And not only put to death, but **gladly and proudly** put to death - **John 16:2** - *"They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when **whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God**."*

People will persecute and kill followers of Christ and do it with an easy conscience because the climate of the culture will be such that Christians will be seen as the **problem**. They will be seen as **intolerant** and **divisive** people. They will be seen as the kind of people a loving God couldn't possibly endorse.

So these are some of the details of Jesus' continuing remarks to His disciples on the specifics of the hatred they can expect from the world. But the big issue still remains for consideration. **Why is Jesus doing this?** What is His reason for **dwelling** on this negative stuff rather than just **mentioning** it? We know He is telling them this to **keep them from "falling away"** (16:1). But **how** is this news going to do that? How does this tough news keep them from **"falling away?"**

The answer to this question is going to be re-emphasized over and over in today's text. But the underlying foundational point is easily stated. Jesus wants His followers to keep from **falling away** by having their lives constructed on a **certain** hope rather than a **false** hope. Jesus has two things to say about this. The **first certain hope** will be found, as we have already seen, in the **eternal place Jesus prepares for them** (14:1-3). And, as we will study in today's text, the **second certain hope** will be found in the **indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit** after Jesus has ascended to the Father (16:7). Any hope not constructed on these two foundations will crumble. No other hope is a **realistic** hope.

The big picture here is if these disciples have unrealistic expectations as to their reception in this world as they bear faithful witness to their Lord they will quickly become disillusioned and discouraged. Nothing deflates our souls like a false hope. And Jesus loves these disciples - and you and me - too much to leave a false hope **not** dismantled. He challenges them to remember His words in their dark moments - **John 16:4** - *"But I have said these things to you, that **when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you**."*

There are lots of things you don't have to remember. And there are a few things you absolutely **must** remember. You **must** reboot your memory around certain key sources of hope.

That's where we are in this great text. Jesus is giving some of the details about the hope based in the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus tells these disciples the Holy Spirit will faithfully come and do a **two-fold work**. He will work in the **disciples** and He will work in the **world**.

And it's this two-fold work of the Spirit to which Jesus turns His words in the rest of our text:

1) **THE SURPRISING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REMEMBERING DOCTRINAL TRUTH AND HAVING A JOYFUL HEART**

John 16:4-7 - "But I have said these things to you, *that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.* [5] But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' [6] But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. [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."

I am labeling this the "*surprising*" relationship between remembering doctrinal truth and a joyful heart because while *Jesus* and the entire *New Testament* constantly link these two things together we still consider them unrelated strangers - you know - "*Don't give us dense doctrinal sermons. We need practical stuff!*"

What I'm hoping to show you from **verses 4 to 7** is Jesus faults His disciples for *not keeping the big theological picture in mind*. And I want to try to prove to you Jesus saw this failure to be the *main cause* of their fear and discouragement.

Here's what I see in **verses 4-7**:

In **verse 4** Jesus calls them to *remember* when their time of persecution comes (2-3) He warned them about it in advance. He also tells them He hadn't told them these truths about His sending of the Holy Spirit *earlier* because He was already physically present with them. The Spirit wouldn't be given until Jesus was glorified.

In **verse 5** we have Jesus' strange disappointment that none of these disciples asked Jesus *where He was going* after His ordeal on the cross. That whole verse just seems strange and we need to consider it in a moment.

In **verse 6** Jesus notes their discouragement and sorrow as they consider His departure and their persecution. Linking this up with **verse 4**, we realize Jesus connected their *discouragement* with their *forgetfulness*.

Verse 7 stresses the unbelievable truth that they will be better off after Jesus is *gone* than when He was *present* because the Holy Spirit will *intensify* the inward presence and power of Jesus more deeply than they could experience while Jesus was *externally* present with them.

That's the main story line of those 5 verses. What I want to do now is pack them all together - like a snowball - about Jesus' strange comment in **verse 5** - "*But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'*"

Before we analyze the *words*, what do you hear in Jesus' *voice*? Anger? Confusion? I hear *disappointment*. He's saddened that, with the nearness of His death and departure from this world, His closest followers haven't asked the big question - "*Where are you going, Jesus?*"

And He's saddened because the *absence* of this question, in any form, shows Jesus they are thinking of His death as an *end* rather than a beginning and a point of *departure*. They are thinking of it as some kind of *colossal failure* rather than the *whole point of His mission*:

John 14:1-3 - "*Let not your hearts be troubled.* Believe in God; believe also in me. [2] In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."

John 14:27-28 - "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. *Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.* [28] You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I."

Back to our **John 16:5** verse. Jesus seems saddened in **verse 5** that no one had even asked Him *where He was going* - "*But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'*"

And here's the point. They didn't have the *big picture* in view. Their world was unraveling. Jesus was dying. They were facing intense persecution. And that's all they could see. And Jesus - facing his last twenty-four hours on earth - is reminding them of the link between *a mind anchored to sound doctrine* and *internal strength and peace in the face of trial*.

The impression one gets from Jesus is *healthy faith must feed on - abide in - the big picture of Christ's total work*. Faith must continually - abiding in the vine? - must *continually* view *present circumstances* through the lense of *future, eternal realities*.

A faith that refuses to **think** about these things will never be able to **remember** these things, and will always be a **discouraged** faith. That's the take-home-from-church point here. Strength doesn't come from **believing** these things. It comes from **re-believing** these things.

2) JESUS' DEPARTURE ISN'T JUST A DEPARTURE - IT'S A DELIVERY

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."

You can imagine the double-take happening as the disciples try to put together Jesus' words. Not only was His death not just an **end** but a **departure** to the Father, but now even this **departure** wasn't just a **departure** but a grand **delivery** to the disciples.

Let's face it. We all find it hard to fully believe Jesus wants to work more fully in our lives **now** by His Spirit than He did **then** when He was physically present. When someone **leaves** us we have **less** of that person than we had before. Not **more**. It doesn't seem possible that we're better off now.

How can this be? The Holy Spirit makes the presence of Jesus more **pervasive** and more **fruitful**. If the ministry of Jesus were still limited to His physical presence today there would be no point in praying for the salvation of any unsaved loved-one. There would be no hope of that happening unless you were able - among the other 7 billion people on this planet - to get to the front of the line in organizing a physical **meeting** between Jesus and your lost child. The **life** of Jesus could only be passed on through the **physical presence** of Jesus.

But through the work of the Holy Spirit there is a **pervasive penetration of Jesus' redemptive work**. And the **reach** of Jesus becomes **inward** rather than just **external**. All of this is to our advantage indeed.

3) THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS A THREE-FOLD WORK IN THE WORLD ITSELF

John 16:8-11 - "And when he comes, he will **convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment**: [9] **concerning sin**, because they do not believe in me; [10] **concerning righteousness**, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; [11] **concerning judgment**, because the ruler of this world is judged."

The three convicting works of the Spirit are laid out by Jesus plainly enough, but are not easy to figure out. Look at them as we wrap up today:

- a) **"...concerning sin because they do not believe in me..."**(9). I think it would disappoint Jesus that if we were making a list of the wicked things people do in the world today - a list of **top sins - bad deeds** - most of us wouldn't even include this greatest of all sins.

What is the **deepest wrong** in the whole world? People do not believe in Jesus as the Messiah, God the Son. People don't **do** anything worse than that. Not anywhere. Not ever. Jesus totally reverses the notion that our beliefs about Himself are nothing more than matters of personal taste.

Our lists of moral wrongs don't probe our hearts **deeply enough** and they aren't **specifically focused enough**. The worst evil of all time is committed regularly by otherwise very **moral** and **humanitarian** people. And the greatest sin of all can't be **compensated** by other good works.

Notice, when the Spirit is at work He is specifically **Christ-centered**. This is not the kind of **spiritual life** Oprah talks about. The authentic Holy Spirit - the second Person of the Triune God - is a **Christ-obsessed Spirit** - **John 16:14** - "He will glorify **me**, for he will take what is **mine** and declare it to you."

On to the **second** convicting work of the Holy Spirit in the world"

- b) **"concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer..."**(10). Jesus is the **right** one to listen to. He is the **legitimate** voice of truth. His words of truth and His actions of redemption are **verifiably righteous**. And the proof of this is Jesus' **return to** and **endorsement by** God the Father - **"...concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you will see me no longer."**

No one else is so ***tied to the Father***. No one else ***speaks the very words of the Father*** - ***John 14:24*** - "Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me."

The authority of Jesus is never tied to public opinion or popular vote. God the Father constantly and consistently ***endorses*** the work of God the Son, Jesus Christ - ***Acts 2:22*** - "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, ***a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know....***"

The Holy Spirit always ***endorses*** Jesus, the Christ, just as God the Father ***endorsed*** Jesus, the Christ. There is an obvious symmetry - a pattern - a ***rightness*** - a ***righteousness*** to this.

Finally, the ***third*** convicting work of the Holy Spirit in the world:

- c) ***"....concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged"***(11). There is ***judgment*** to the world here and ***comfort*** to Jesus' disciples. Jesus says the Holy Spirit points to the triumph of God the Son on the cross over the ***"ruler of this world"*** to discredit any hope based on Satan's lies of ultimate security circumventing belief in and obedience to Jesus Christ.

This is why Jesus still refers to Satan as the ***"ruler of this world"***(11). This is our Lord's way of reminding us Satan's ways only ***appear*** successful when viewed short-term. Any rejection of Christ will only ***look*** successful for a brief time. No one should boast or gloat in his or her rebellion. Even this world's ruler is already damned.

But I want to close with this same third work of the Spirit - ***"....concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged"***(11) - and apply it to how the Spirit uses this truth to encourage disciples:

John 16:12-15 - "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. [13] When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you ***into all the truth***, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and ***he will declare to you the things that are to come***. [14] He will ***glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you***. [15] All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

I have to hurry. What should be a source of consternation to the ***world*** is a wonderful source of ***hope*** to the disciple of Christ. Notice the way Jesus said the Spirit would lead them ***"into all truth"***(13). That means the Spirit will ***intensify the implications*** of the words and works of Jesus. He will sustain His claim on our lives against the apparent strength of all that wears against us. He will make our ultimate defeat impossible through the eternal accomplishment of our Lord.

In a way that is deceptively hard to remember right now, the ***ruler of this world*** is only an ***apparent*** ruler. Yes, there are times when those soon-to-be-martyred disciples will ***feel*** like they're on the losing side. Sometimes you do too. Sometimes problems don't go away. Sometimes they get worse after you have prayed. People you love die. Good people lose jobs and income. Questions nag without answers.

But nothing robs us of what Christ has accomplished. It stands as an unerasable ***finished*** work. The Sunday morning headlines that first Easter morning were - ***"Jesus Christ Wins the Week-end!"***