

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Fully Alive

PART

42

TITLE

The Helper Has Come

SCRIPTURE

John 16:1-15



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I want to ask you to turn with me to John 16. If you're a guest with us and if you didn't bring with you a Bible, there should be one in a seat near you. If you don't have one at home, we would love for you to take that home as a gift for you to have your own copy of God's word.

We're in a series through John. We've been here for over a year. We have two months left. The whole series is really built on the back of what John said is the reason of why he wrote, and that is to convince his readers that Jesus is the Christ and that we would believe that fact and in believing that we would have life in his name. Every single one of these stories, everything selected by John, is specifically designed to help you believe and me believe that Jesus is the Christ and then to know how our believing in Christ can lead to a life that's full.

We're up to John 16. This is an amazing passage. It's one part bitter and one part really sweet. The Bible tells us that without the work of God's spirit in our life is that we won't be able to leave with what God really wants us to leave with unless God does a miracle in our heart through the Holy Spirit. We want to pray for that even now. If you would, let's pray.

Father, thank you for the Bible and thank you for including John. God, thank you that 50 years after the fact that you arose from the dead that you inclined John's heart to write down what he remembered by the power of your spirit. We thank you, God, that it's been preserved with its integrity all the way through these centuries down to us and we have an actual copy of the letter that John wrote. Just amazed.

We're so grateful, and we pray, God, that you would speak through weakness, you would speak through distraction, you would speak through fear and that you would help us to see Jesus as supreme. Would you have us to believe what we read, help us to understand it and know how it's pertinent and practical to our life, and would you give us the courage to put it into practice? God, we are so grateful for the Bible, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Just a few years ago our family was out in the northwest, Washington State and went to Idaho, to some really cool, amazing places up there. We have three boys, and we were there for a while, and so we planned out several various adventures. I think the one that stands maybe higher or taller than the rest was we went rafting down the White Salmon River. Now, the White Salmon River is an amazing river. In fact, there's a little picture I want to show you. Here's our family, right?

You notice we're all in wet suits except for the guide. He's like Iron Man back there. The water, in fact, I looked at that yesterday, and the water today is 33 degrees, because this water is snow runoff. It's melted snow basically from Mount Adams. In fact, Mount Adams you can see the whole time you're going. Most of this amazing winding river, it's very, very narrow and it's in these tall canyons, and so it's in the shade so it's really cold. It's really adventurous. Most of the rapids are a four or higher. Then it ends ... It's the coolest thing. You go up this 15-foot waterfall. We had an amazing time.

Only one of us fell off, and it was a she, and so she's not here today so I can say that.

We had an amazing, amazing time. Right before we suited up with these wet suits, our guide sat us down and he told us three very specific things. The first thing he did was he informed us of the risk of what we were about to do, that there is risk involved. The second thing he did or said was he made promises, and those went in two different directions. He said, "I promise you pleasure. You're going to have a great time. I also promise you pain. In one way or another, either at the end of the day of rowing you're going to be sore, or you're going to hit a rock or you're going to go into the water, something, that there's pleasure and there's pain." Then the third thing he says, "But I promise you this, I'm going to guide you through."

When I read John 16 multiple times and praying to God, "What are you doing in this passage," that's the memory that popped up. What you find here in John 16 is the night before Jesus goes to the cross, he's telling his disciples that he's leaving them in order to go and cut a channel to God so that people can get to God, can be reconciled to God.

He says that there's a mission that's in front of you that is important, it's vital, people need to hear the gospel all over the world. What he does is he does three things here. Number one is he informs us of risk. There really is a risk to telling people the gospel of Jesus Christ. There's a risk to living in obedience to Jesus in our culture and in the world. There's a risk to these things. The second thing he does is he promises us a measure of pleasure and pain. He says, "You know what? I'm going to be with you. I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you. There is pleasure involved in walking with me, but it's also sometimes painful." The third thing he does is he reassures every single one of us that he, through his Holy Spirit, is going to guide us through.

Let's read it together. I want to back up to Verse 1. We need a good running start, okay? "I've said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. 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, and they will do these things because they have not known the Father nor me, but I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you."

"I did not say these things to you from the beginning because I was with you, but now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you ask me where are you going, but because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 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, and when he comes he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. Concerning sin because they do not believe in me. Concerning righteousness because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer. Concerning judgment because the ruler of this world is judged."

“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all 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. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the father has is mine. Therefore, I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

There's two things that I want you to see here, just two simple points. Simple but still very, very hard. The first is this, is that Jesus promised persecution to believers. He promises it to us as well. We will face a measure of persecution and pain because we're walking with Jesus. You see, like a rafting guide who's detailing the risk of the journey, Jesus says in Verse 1, “I've said these things so that you're not alarmed and you're not going to fall away. You're not going to walk away. You're not stunned. You're not astonished when they happen to you.”

We have to ask the question, “What things?” He says, “These things I've spoken to you,” so what are, “These things?” Well, in Chapter 14, if you remember, is when this long time of teaching ... not started. It actually started in 13 where he washes their feet, and he says, “Now, you've seen what I've done. Now go do likewise.” Then you get to Chapter 14, and he wants to cast an amazing, hopeful picture in front of us of what life will be like not only with him on the earth but in particular in heaven. He says, “I'm going to make promises to you. I am the way, the truth and the life. I'm going to cut a path to God for you, and I'm going to go to my father's house where there's many rooms, and I'm going to prepare a place for you so that where I am you can be with me forever.” Amazing promises.

Then he gets to Chapter 15, and in Chapter 15 what he wants to do is he wants to paint a word picture. You can think of a canvas, and he goes, “This is how life can be like not only in heaven but what's available for you right now here on the earth,” and so he starts to draw through the use of a metaphor. He says, “I am the true vine. I'm the source of life, and everyone who trusts in me as a savior and lord of their life, everyone who believes in me, that I rose from the dead, my Father takes as a branch and grafts into the vine.”

The Father, it says, who's the vine dresser, it says that he cuts the vine. He cuts the branch down to the heart of both of them. He connects the heart of both of them, and then he wraps twine and he closes that gap. Then it says that the Holy Spirit is sort of like the sap, begins to take the nutrients and resources that are found within the roots, within the soil, that's going through this healthy fruit-producing vine and literally going into a branch that's now being grafted in so that you and I can bear fruit, and he tells us what kind of fruit that it would be. He says that when you're abiding in me, and my spirit is literally giving you the fuel to bear fruit to prove, to show, that you are my disciple, he says that you can expect to see some fruit in your life.

One of the fruits, he says, is character. He says that you're going to become like me. You'll be inclined to want to be like me. Various characteristics, like love and joy, peace and patience and kindness and goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The fruits of the spirit will be born in your life.

He talks about how our heart will also be inclined to obey the Lord, that when we're abiding in Christ, it's our pleasure to live for what pleases him. He also talks about that we'll be inclined within our heart to talk about Jesus Christ. The reason is when we're abiding in Christ, all of a sudden we love Christ, and it's just human nature to talk about what we love. He says that you can expect to see these fruits in your life. "This is what's available for you if you will abide in me."

Suddenly what Jesus does, when he gets to Chapter 15:18 is he takes this portrait that, if you think about it thus far, it's just very bright. There's lots of bright oranges or apples and sunlight and green and grass and fruit-bearing and everything's happy and everything's positive and productive, and all of a sudden he says, "But let me add one more thing to the canvas." All of a sudden he draws a picture that is so dark and ominous, perhaps like the one you see here on the screen, where he says, "But there is a storm brewing, and that storm that's brewing right now, it's hovering over me, but very shortly it will hover over you."

He starts saying things like this. He says, "I want you to think about this for a second. The world hates the vine. You're about to be grafted onto a vine if you believe in me, and yet the world hates the vine." Indeed, in just a matter of hours this vine would be crucified on a cross, the vine that we're connected to. Then he says, "If they persecuted me, they'll also persecute you." Then he tells them, us, in Verse 2 and 3 exactly what it will look like. He says, "First thing they're going to do is they're going to throw you out of the synagogue."

Now, in our day and age we have a lot of churches in Raleigh, don't we? If you're asked to leave one church, you just go to another church. It's not a big deal. But if you're a Jewish person living at this time in one of these Jewish villages, there was one synagogue, and the synagogue was not just church. It was the place of all public discourse. It was the place where big decisions were made for the community. It was a place of worship. It was a place of relationship. It was a place of friendship, and so when he says, "You'll be put out of the synagogue," what he's saying is this. You as believers, as you're faithful to walk in mission with me, you'll be quarantined. You'll be quarantined by the culture. You'll be made an example of. You'll be marginalized. You'll be seen as the problem. Then he says, to make matters worse, he goes, "In the hours coming I tell you the truth, that whoever kills you will think that he's offering service to God."

Now, some of us have read through the New Testament. If you can think back to a guy's name of Saul, right? If you think of Saul before he came to faith in Christ, and God changed his name to Paul, and Paul ended up writing most of the New Testament, before that he was Saul. One thing we know is Paul remembered Saul. He remembered his past, and he writes of his past. I'm going to read some of it to you.

The first chapter of Galatians, Paul says, "You have heard of my former life," he says, "How I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age, among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers."

What you see in this passage is not only a portrait of Paul's past when he was Saul, but you also see the blueprint for all Christian persecution throughout time, and it is this. "Harm Christians. Advance in your religion." "Kill the infidel. Advance in your place with God." "Put him in prison. Advance." "Take their things away. Advance." This is what Paul said. He said, "I was violently opposed to this way, to Christ and to his followers, and by doing so I was advancing faster than everyone else my age in my religion." This is the heart-beat. This is why 10 of the 11 remaining apostles were all martyred for Christ.

If you fast forward a bunch of years to 2016, last year, it was estimated that 105,000 Christians were martyred specifically because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Estimates now say that in the 20th century, 26 million believers were martyred throughout the world for their faith in Jesus Christ, which was more than the previous 19 centuries combined, and every bit of it is, "Harm Christians, advance in my religion." It's why it happens.

What he says, though, is this, as thought their religious ... Verse 3. John writes, "Jesus says, 'Though they're very religious, they don't know my father and they don't know me.'" You can be religious and not know God. You can go to Providence Baptist Church and not know God.

Then all of a sudden he says in Verse 4 something that's really interesting. He says, "I didn't say this at the beginning, because I was with you." When I first read that I thought, "Is this like bait and switch? 'Hey, come follow me. Leave all your stuff. Now that you're here and I'm about to die, this is what's going to go down.' Is that what's happening? Maybe but I don't think so."

I think what he's saying here is this. He's saying, "Guys, so far I've not had to really tell you this before, because so far it's all come to me. As we've been walking around Judea, every time someone wanted to throw someone off of a cliff, it was me. It wasn't you. When people picked up stones in order to stone somebody in our little group, it wasn't to stone you. It was to stone me, but now I'm going away, and all of the animosity that was directed towards me is now going to be redirected towards you." I think he says, "Don't go seeking it out, but as you are faithful to bear fruit and to share the gospel, it will seek you out."

This is a hard thing, isn't it? There's been a lot of passages in John that we left, and we were like, Ooh, that's very nice." John 3:16 was a good one, wasn't it? This is encouraging and uplifting, like K-LOVE, you know? This is so good. It's just wonderful. All of a sudden, listen to me, it's the same set of lips that said, "I am the way, the truth and the life," that says, "If they persecuted me, they're going to persecute you." You can't dismiss the one, no matter how many TV preachers say you can. Jesus, the vine that we are connected to, says, "One day we will know pain because of our faith in him."

You have to ask the question. I did. All right, why would abiding in Christ and bearing this kind of fruit where we're loving and where we're obedient to Christ, why would this result in persecution to us, to you and to me? Why would that happen? The reason ... Hear this really carefully, okay? Is because it's our human nature to resist whatever threatens the objects of our love. It's our nature to resist whatever threatens the objects of our love.

For example, I love my wife Tabitha, so if my wife Tabitha is threatened by someone or something, then you can count that it's my human nature to stand in between, to resist whatever is threatening my wife. I love my kids, so the same thing would happen. I love my church, so the same thing would happen. We naturally resist, even for us, as believers. It's also true if with things that aren't people. For example, ideologies. There's people who have a love for an ideology in life, and when someone else comes and threatens what they love, they become resistant to whoever is threatening.

The same thing is true of sin. The Bible says that we sin because we love to sin. Our heart loves to sin. That's the greatest problem we have is not that you sinned yesterday, it's that your heart wanted to. The world loves their sin. John 3, Jesus says, "They don't come to the light, because people love their sin," so what happens when people come and they're obeying Christ and they're calling sin, sin? What happens is when people love their sin and there's something that's set up that threatens what they love, then they become resistant to whoever is the threatening party.

Let me show you a real-life example in Jesus. Luke 16:13-14, "Jesus says, 'You cannot serve God and money.'" End quote and there's a commentary. "The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him," so what's happening here? First of all, let's find out who loves something in here. You have Pharisees, and it says that they were lovers of money. They looked at money and they loved money. Now all of a sudden someone came on the scene and was threatening their love by saying, "You cannot serve God and money." What did they do? They became resistant to who was threatening what they loved, and they ridiculed him.

You see, as you and I, as we abide in Christ, we seek to obey the word of Christ and bear the fruit of Christ and talk about Christ, then our pursuit of purity is going to threaten those who love impurity. Our belief in the dignity of human life from conception is going to threaten those who love to play in the sand of sovereignty. Our believe in the Bible's exclusive authority is going to threaten those who love to write their own standard of morality. Our belief in Jesus' exclusive claims about himself will threaten those who love the false freedom of taking any path to God.

This always leads to one of two things, ridicule or repentance. I either make fun of or harm whoever is threatening what I love, or I have to change direction. You ask the question, “Well, what happens in our day and age in America? We’ve not experienced a tremendous amount of persecution like the rest of the world. Why would we not be experiencing that today?” I can only think of two reasons. Number one is our light is too dim, meaning we’re just too much like the world for them to notice. Or, number two, our time is coming.

Jesus, our Lord, promises us persecution. What do we apply to this? I think the thing that’s most important is this, as I’ve thought through this all week. Let’s trust that Christ’s presence is better than the absence of pain. Let’s move to the place in our own journey with Christ, that we would rather have Christ than to have the impulse of pain removed from our life.

If you had to choose one, which would you choose? I want you to listen very carefully here. There is absolutely nothing in this text and nothing in the Bible that would suggest that we as believers put on some false arrogant bravado that foolishly incites tension with the world. People have done that. People have gone out and said, “Well, it says here I’m going to be persecuted, so I’m going to go out and I’m going to be rude in the name of Jesus. Then when it comes, I’m going to say, ‘I’m suffering for Jesus.’”

Peter says that person is an idiot. He says, “If you suffer, it should be for the sake of righteousness and for the gospel and not because we’re rude or self-seeking or arrogant.” Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons, daughters of God.” You see, everything in this text simply urges us to hold onto Christ no matter the cost.

I told you already there’s people who preach to us in this world today all over America who say if you have faith in Christ, it’s an entitlement to an easy life, but Jesus Christ said, “You and I are branches that are attached to a persecuted vine,” so you’ve got to pick your teacher. I would encourage you to pick Jesus.

You see, the fact is if our culture continues down its current path, which it will without a supernatural revival in our land, if that doesn’t take place and our culture continues its current path of sliding further and further from the foundation of God’s word, then you can bet that what we believe in this place, what we value in this place, how we seek to live in accordance with the Bible in this place, and what we preach in this place will become more polarizing as time progresses.

I want you to know that I feel this. I don’t say this or read this and think, “I’m above all of this.” I feel the weight of when I stand up and I preach and I read the text and I say, “In this day and age in our culture, this is what I’m going to say into a microphone that’s recorded and cameras that’s put out publicly for other people, that they can go and look,” I feel all of that. I feel what it means for my family. I feel what it means for the family of faith. Routinely I feel those things.

There's a lot of people who don't like when we read the Bible and we say, "This is true." When we say that adultery is sin, when we say that homosexuality is sin, when we say that life begins at conception," there's a lot of people who don't like that, and to be honest with you, some of those people let me know they don't like that.

I also feel the weight for you, that if you're to walk with Christ and seek to share the gospel and seek to be a man or woman of integrity in the workplace, it may cost you your job, and so I don't look at this and say, "Look at us. We're an army. Let's go." I look at this and said, "All it makes me do is to say I've just got to get closer to Jesus."

This isn't about being brave. It's about being near Jesus, because being near Jesus makes you brave. It's about Christ and only Christ. If this day comes in America that it seems like it's coming faster than ever before, I simply commend us as a body of believers to choose Christ over the absence of pain.

There will come a day, I believe, in America where people who come to church because they're religious will no longer come to church, and the reason is because religion is not better than the absence of pain. If this is about religion to you, it's about marking something off so that your conscience feels better about yourself, this will not help you sustain in the day of adversity. It's about Jesus, not religion. If Jesus is not due north in your heart, pain will let you know. This is what Jesus is saying. I would rather just start in Verse 5. Let's talk about the spirit who's going to help us, but Jesus sets in context, "The spirit is going to help us." Why do we need help? Because Verse 1 through 4 is true.

I just want you to know that the apostles and the church planners that we read of in the New Testament and 105,000 believers, they gave their life last year for the faith that we profess and we sing about right here in this room. They would all concur with Paul when he said, "This slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison." When you get to heaven and see Jesus, I promise you, alongside all those who have gone before us, that we will say, "He is better than the absence of pain," and so hold onto Christ.

All right. Let's get into the good news. Jesus promised help to believers. He promised help. This is great news for us, but it's interesting. If you look at Verse 5, he actually starts on an interesting note, right? What he's just said to them has led these disciples to fear, to become introspective about what's this going to mean for me personally? What's it going to mean for my family, that all this is going to come my way if I'm following Jesus?

Jesus, what he does, it's amazing. He unleashes perhaps what is his most vulnerable, personal statement in all of John. I say perhaps because I'm not the judge of that, but when I look at this, I think that's the most human thing that I remember Jesus saying, and this is what he says. He says, "I'm going to him who sent me, and none of you ask, 'Where are you going?'"

Imagine you're a student studying a semester abroad. You have a host family. You really hit it off with the family, so much so that you say, "You know what? I want to stay another semester," so you stay a whole year. You miss your family so much you can't wait to see them, and yet you're really experiencing an amazing thing. You're learning. Opportunities are expanding and so you are away. Then those months, they turn into weeks and then days before the time for you to go back. There's such an affinity, there's such an affection for one another, that all anyone can say is, "We're just going to miss you. We're going to miss you. We're going to miss you." They're just saying, "This is terrible. This is terrible." Yet for you, you're going home.

What Jesus says here is this, "I realize sorrow has so filled your heart, but have you guys ever thought what this means for me? None of you are asking what the reunion in heaven is going to be like. None of you are asking what it's going to be for me that when I go back and sit on my throne ..." You see, Jesus had already said in John 14:28, he says, "If you love me, you would have rejoiced because I'm going back to my father." We want good for our friends, don't we? Jesus, "I get to go home. I get to go be back with my father." It's an amazing thing. Then he says, "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I don't go away, the helper will not come to you."

What we find next is three specific things that the Holy Spirit is going to help us with in this mission. You can see in the slide right here the verbs that are highlighted of what he does. It says when he comes he's going to convict the world. He's going to guide you in all truth. He will declare to you the things that are to come, and he will glorify me. I'm going to combine the center two into one. I'm going to talk about three specific things that the Holy Spirit does to help us and then three applications for that.

The first is the Spirit guides us in truth. This is a wonderful thing if you think about it, because throughout Chapter 14 through Chapter 16, he's brought up four different times where he says the Holy Spirit will come, and every time he brings up the Holy Spirit's role in our life, it's always talking about bringing truth to us. He says he's the spirit of truth. He's going to lead you into all truth. He's going to tell you things.

It's an amazing gift of what he does, and here he says, "He will guide you, believers, into all truth, and he will declare ..." You see, unlike cults, Christianity does not thrive in a vacuum of truth, and yet without help, you and I cannot understand the truth of God. This is what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:7-10. In Verse 6, which is not up here, it actually says there's two different kinds of wisdom. There's the wisdom of God and there's the wisdom of the world. Then he says this, "But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory."

None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would have not crucified the Lord of glory. These things God has revealed to us through the spirit. What he's saying is this. There's two different kinds of wisdom. There's the wisdom of the world and then there's the wisdom of God. The wisdom of God is captured in the pages of scripture.

What it's saying is this, is that for those without the Holy Spirit, it is an impossibility to understand and appreciate the word of God. Then he says, "Here's how impossible it is." For the people who were living on the earth, the rulers of the day, God's wisdom in all of its fullness was embodied in the person of Jesus Christ, and God's wisdom stood directly in front of the rulers of this age, and instead of saying, "That's wisdom," they said, "Let's crucify him." They cannot see it. It's the Holy Spirit literally that has to unpack things. It has to start within the heart so that when we're sharing the gospel, it's the Holy Spirit's role to open up people's eyes so that they can understand.

You see, this took place in my own life. I grew up in an amazing family where my parents, they taught me the Bible frequently, and they encouraged me to read the Bible. Every time I would try to read the Bible, I would either get bored or confused. I would. I would tell God that. I'd read parables, Jesus' parables, and I'm like, "These should be interesting." I would conclude, "Why would you talk like that? Just say it like it is. What are you trying to say here?" I couldn't see it.

All of a sudden when I was 16 years old one night in my room, the Lord just met me at a low time, and he confronted me, and he said, "You're going to struggle in your heart until you trust me as Lord and Savior." That night I did. I trusted Christ, and I said, "I believe in you," and all of a sudden God changed. He regenerated my heart. I remember the very next morning I woke up ... I've never done this before. I was inclined to read the Bible. I don't know why. I just ... Let's see. I opened it up and all of a sudden it started coming to life. I'm like, "This is what he was trying to say." The only difference was the spirit of God was on the inside of me instead of the outside of me.

Now, I can tell you that there's a lot of things that I don't understand in the world. There's a lot of things I don't understand in the Bible. Even yesterday, I got some news that was really disappointing to me and so disappointing it took me two different hour-long walks just to settle, right? I was disturbed and I was frustrated. I was like, "God, why? Why ..." Honestly, "God, why would you do it this way?"

I don't have all the answers to that right now, but what I can tell you is this. On more occasions than I can number I have sat before God with an open Bible and asked God's spirit to help me to understand either what is in this book or to help me understand what's happening in the world in light of this book, and God, by his spirit, has met me there time after time after time.

If we believe the spirit guides us in truth and providence, let's yield to the spirit and stand on God's worth. Let's be students of the word. Let's love the word. Let's read the word. Let's understand the word. When things make it hard in our lifetime, let's not leave the word. The second thing the spirit does is he convicts the world. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. You see this in Verse 11, Verses 8 through Verse 11.

Now, for someone to believe in Christ, God's spirit must go to work. John 3:8. You guys remember this? It says, "The wind blows where it wishes. You hear its sound but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the spirit," every single person in the world. We're sitting on a makeshift raft with a makeshift sail needing wind to move. You can't control the wind.

The spirit of God has to do that. The spirit of God blows, and all of a sudden what happens is when God's spirit moves and he removes the blindfold from people's eyes, and he helps us to see that Jesus is consequential and that he's amazing and he's significant, and he regenerates our heart, and how he does this, it says that he convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment through the witness of God's people.

Sometimes we read the word "convict," and he goes, "Oh, he makes them feel bad." It's not really what it means. What it really means here is this, is that when we share the gospel, he literally prosecutes them. He proves their guilt so that they look and they go, "Wow, court has already been adjourned. I can't add up more good works to try to sway the jury right now." No, but you can trust Christ. The Bible says that all his righteousness comes down upon us. The court goes back into session, and God says, "I justify him. He's innocent." "She's innocent."

You see, our mission is not to convict. Our mission is to share. We're just the mailman. It's our job to deliver the mail, not to create any emotional response whatsoever. It's God's work to do the convicting. What he says here is he does it in three different ways. He says he convicts of sin because they do not believe. What that means is this, is not believing in Jesus is truly the worst sin of all, for to reject Jesus is to reject God's provision for all of our other sins.

The Holy Spirit says it doesn't really matter what all you haven't done in terms of sin. Have you ever sinned? Yes. All right. Well, then there's only one thing that matters. Are you believing in Jesus Christ or not, because if you don't believe in Jesus Christ you have no atonement. There's no forgiveness for anything else that you've done.

The second thing he says, that he convicts the world of righteousness, and he says, "Why?" He goes, "Because I go to the Father and you'll no longer see me." What this means is there's only one person who's ever walked on this earth who had the right at the end of his life or her life to go directly on his own merit into the presence of God, and it wasn't you and it wasn't me. It was Jesus.

When he says he convicts the world of righteousness, what he's saying is he's convicting us that we're not righteous and there's only one, and if we don't go with him, we don't go. Then he says he convicts the world of judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. Galatians 2:15 says, "Christ disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame."

What this means is this, is if God has conquered and judged the most powerful evil in the universe, then you and I are not going to escape his judgment either. He helps us by, he does the work of transformation in people's lives, and there's one other thing he does, and it's third, and the the spirit keeps our focus on Jesus. He says, "He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine, and he will declare it to you." I just love how the Bible says the Holy Spirit never wants to steal the show. Every time he moves, he moves to direct your attention to Jesus Christ.

You see, in our head, just like this picture is like on a swivel, in the world we're distracted by so many things. In the church we're distracted by so many things. We open up the Bible and we say, "What should I read?" So many of us, we just live our life constantly turning right and left and right and left and right and left, and the Holy Spirit's job to help us is he grabs us the ears and he goes, "Stop moving and just focus your attention on Jesus."

"What should I read?" "Read about Jesus." "What should I do today?" "Glorify Jesus." It's all about Jesus. The Holy Spirit reminds us of Jesus' promises, of his death and resurrection. He reminds us that Jesus is better than life and death and everything else, and so, Providence, let's yield to the spirit and live for the glory of God. If this is true and he's helping us this way, then let's live for the glory of Jesus Christ. Let's pray together.

Father in heaven, thank you for your kindness to us, where we're inclined right now even to pray. I'm inclined to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who will give up their life for the very thing that we sing about right now. We pray that you would help them to endure. I pray, Father, that if the day comes here in America, that you would help us to endure.

We thank you for the mercy you pour out to us to forgive us of our sin. Thank you for the mercy that you pour out in giving us the Holy Spirit. Thank you for the mercy that you've poured out to us to help us to see that Jesus is better than the absence of pain. We pray that you would help us to excel in these things still more.

We're grateful. We love you. As we give to you in worship as well as in giving, we pray that you would take these things and expand your name to the ends of the earth, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.



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