



SERMON TITLE: The Spirit's Mission in the World

DATE: November 1, 2020

SCRIPTURE: John 16:4-15

PASTOR: Charlie Boyd

"These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ" (John 20:31). This is how John concludes his biography of Jesus. He wanted the young, the old, the sick, the well, the despairing, the hopeful, the skeptics, the faithful, and whoever reads his account of Jesus to believe and trust him more fully. But what did John want them to believe? He wanted them to believe that Jesus alone brought eternal life into the present, broken world. And for all who enter this eternal life with God right now, we—like John—are exiles. For all who enter a relationship with Jesus, we will very likely be marginalized and dismissed because we follow him. So, what does it mean to believe? And how do we mature in believing? What does it mean to remain faithful to God when the pressure is on? These are the things that John will help us explore by showing us the glory and beauty of Jesus.

As the world grows darker and the hostility gets louder, it's easy for believers to get discouraged by thinking the mission to which Jesus has called us is like "Mission Impossible." On the night of Jesus' betrayal and arrest, the 11 disciples are wondering the same thing. Jesus has told them he is leaving them. He's going back to the Father. He's told them he will send them another Helper—the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of truth—who will make God's love for them personal as they stay connected to Jesus. But now he's telling them that the "world" will hate them, persecute them, ostracize them, and even kill them. You'll remember from last week that the "world" is the organized system of unbelief that stands in opposition to God and the truth that has come to us in Jesus. Behind this "world system" stands Satan and his demon armies that wage war against the purposes of God and the people of God. So, Jesus is sending them out into a hostile world to confront people with God's truth and it's hard for them to see how that mission could stand any chance of success. The question is—"How are we going to confront this hostile, hateful, persecuting world with the Gospel and have any success on this mission?" Again, in 14:26, 15:26-27, 16:7, and 16:13—Jesus has told them the Helper, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, will help them carry on his mission. But exactly how will the Helper help them?

READ 16:4-15 —We're focusing today on vv8-11, but it's important to get the whole context, especially v13 in order to understand the "convicting" ministry of the HS that Jesus talks about in vv8-11. Jesus is specifically talking about the convicting work of the HS *in the world*. And Jesus says here in v13—The primary role and ministry of the HS in the world is to equip the Spirit-filled Church of God with the Spirit-inspired Word of God. Jesus is talking about how the Spirit of Truth will *help* us speak the truth to a world system blinded by Satan and held captive by his lies. Yes, the work of the Spirit in believers is to make Jesus personal to us and to give us strength and boldness "to bear witness" to him. That is his ministry in the life of believers. But here, the focus is on the work of the Spirit in the world, among unbelievers. The Spirit's primary ministry in the world is to confront/convict the world of its rebellion against God and the truth that has come to us in Jesus. And here in v13—Jesus is talking about the work of the Spirit *in the world* and *he's telling his apostles* that the *primary ministry* of the Spirit of truth is that he will "teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you"—v13—to *guide you into all truth*. That's his *primary ministry*—to reveal the Truth to them—to reveal the teaching of Christ to them—to *reveal the truth that will be needed for the future mission of the church*. I'm saying that, *right here*, what we have is a promise from Jesus to the apostles that he will put all that truth into their hands. The whole truth about who Jesus is and why he came—*what will be written down in the four Gospels—the story of Christ and everything he said*. *The Spirit will bring all that back into their minds*. And then—the Spirit will give them Jesus' instruction to the young churches that will be planted by the apostles and those instructions will be written down in the Epistles. And then—he'll tell them about the future and that extends through the book of Revelation—*You ready for this?—This is a promise of the divine inspiration of what we now call the New Testament*. We know that "all Scripture is God-breathed" (2Tim3:16) and the Holy Spirit is the breath of God." Peter says that the Scriptures have come to us as *men were moved by the Spirit to write what God inspired* (2Pet1:20-21). *One more time, this is the promise of the divine inspiration of the NT*. The Helper will help us by equipping us with the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph6:17) so we can speak God's truth to people and world systems that are opposed to God and the people of God.

Now having said that—let's go back to v8—READ again v8-11— This is brief, to the point. It's definitive, profound, and all encompassing—and it's hard to understand—*It gave me fits all week long trying to get my head around it*, but we need to understand it because it's a description of the Spirit's mission in the world today. Now, Jesus' *purpose* in sharing this is to encourage them and us that the mission he calls us to is *not impossible* despite the fact that the world will hate

Fellowship Greenville 3161 S Highway 14, Greenville, SC 29615-5906

us and persecute us. These words are meant to encourage us. And encouragement is something we desperately need right now, isn't it? Jesus has given us the *Spirit of truth*—the *Helper*—to come alongside to help us fulfill our mission. If we're going into a hostile world—we're going to have to have a supernatural power to help us break through the hatred and hostility and the persecution. And in the days ahead—*as the world grows darker and the hostility gets louder*—Jesus assures us that we have exactly what we need to stand firm in the face of the opposition—he's given us *the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God* (Eph6:17) to equip us for life and mission with Jesus. When we talk about the "convicting" work of the Spirit, the first thing we think about is something like—"I was convicted that I ate too much last night"—meaning, I felt bad about eating too much. That is not what the word "convict" means here in v8. Of course, it's true that no one will ever repent and believe the Gospel apart from the HS's work in their life. 2Tim2:25 says, "It is God (thru the Spirit), who grants repentance." But here, Jesus isn't talking about the internal ministry of the Spirit. He's talking about how the Spirit—*through the apostles—through the Spirit-inspired New Testament the apostles and their associates would write down and pass down from generation to generation*—he's talking about how the Word of the Spirit written in the NT—spoken through us—will "convict" the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. The Spirit of God, speaking the Word of God, through the Church of God will render a guilty verdict on people who reject Jesus and call them to repentance—*That's what Jesus is saying. It is the Bible* that we hold in our hand today that "brings a charge against" a world in rebellion against God. This Spirit-inspired book, spoken by the church, declares "God's final guilty verdict" on sin and righteousness and judgment. Sin — people's guilt — people's helpless. Judgment — people's destiny. *Of sin*—we are all guilty. *"For we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God"* (Rom3:23). *Of righteousness*—we are powerless to help ourselves. *"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us that in him, we might become the righteousness of God"* (2Cor5:21). *Of judgment*—we cannot escape—our eternal destiny is fixed without divine help—" [God] has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man [Jesus] whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). These three words are the Gospel of God.

Here's the Big Idea—'The Church of God, filled with the Spirit of God, speaking the Word of God will confront the world and its lies with the truth of God.' As we are on mission with Jesus—as we live and share the truth of Scripture with those who do not know God—the Spirit does his work of convicting the world—of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He convicts the world from Spirit-inspired Scripture through us, his Spirit-filled people.

Discussion Starters —

- Begin by asking the group this question—When you think about the mission Jesus has called us to—especially as the world is turning more and more against the church—what things make it harder to reach this generation than in the past? What things today make it seem almost impossible for the church to have any impact on the world. Spend awhile on this question. Try to flesh out simple "call out" answers. Dig deeper.
- Now have someone read John 16:4-15. Ask: Why does Charlie think that what Jesus promises the eleven disciples has to do with the Apostle's doctrine that eventually gets written down to become our New Testament? Look closely at vv12-15. Especially v13. Keep in mind, Jesus is explaining to these men how the HS will equip them to carry his mission forward in a hostile world.
- How would what Jesus says here be an encouragement to those men? to us?
- POP QUIZ—What are the "Five Solas" of the Protestant Reformation. Bonus points if you know the date of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.
- According to vv8-11, the HS's convicting ministry in the world involves sin, righteousness, and judgment. Work on unpacking what each of these statements mean. How is it that these three words are a short outline of the Gospel?
- There are two applications of all this that can be discussed in your small group time. If the Big Idea of the message is: 'The Church of God, filled with the Spirit of God, speaking the Word of God will confront the world and its lies with the truth of God'—then two application questions might be—"Are you spending consistent time in the Word of God so that you'll be equipped for life and mission with Jesus?" If not, why not? What would have to change for you to become more convinced that time in God's word is of utmost importance? Second, are you asking the Spirit to give your opportunities to share with people who do not know God but might be open to God?