

The Work of the Spirit

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[0:00] John chapter 16, starting at the second half of verse 4. Jesus is speaking. 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.

[1:05] 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. That is the word of the Lord.

Please be seated. If you want to use the Pew Bible, I'm on page 902. It's where we'll find our text if you're using the Pew Bible.

Thank you, praise team. Y'all warmed us up. Thank you. Now, okay, we laugh about this now.

[2:09] But when a couple breaks up, it became common, you remember? For the one doing the breaking up, the one doing the leaving to say something like this, it's not you, it's me.

I mean, we laugh about it now, but if you've received that word, you weren't laughing. It's not you, it's me. And that's the post, and the person saying that is trying to ease their conscience and make the breakup easier by taking the blame.

Now, wonder of wonders, Jesus says something similar here. He is leaving, but he wants his disciples to see that it has to be this way.

It's not them, it's me. It's actually better that he goes away, but he's not breaking up with us, nor is he abandoning them or us.

Jesus' leaving makes room for the work of the Spirit in our lives. So let me ask you a question. How are you seeing the Spirit work in your life?

[3:30] What is he doing? An old pastor years ago used to always say, the Spirit does not come into our lives to do nothing. Do you see the handiwork or the work of the Spirit in your life?

In this teaching in the upper room, our Lord speaks a lot about the Holy Spirit. I mean, we look at chapter 13 through chapter 17, the Spirit comes up a lot. His two favorite names for the Spirit are the Helper and the Spirit of Truth.

He keeps referring to the Holy Spirit in this way. Now this passage that we're looking at comes on the heels of how the Spirit equips the disciples, the church, to bear witness to Jesus, even when we're being persecuted.

You see, the early disciples faced a great danger in their witness. Jesus said in verse 2 of chapter 16 that 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 that was fulfilled. Right away, Saul of Tarsus, you know that name.

[4 : 48] He became the Apostle Paul when Jesus got a hold of him. But before that, he was ravaging the church, the Bible says. He was jailing and killing Christians in the name of God.

He thought he was serving God by killing Jesus' disciples. There's nothing more dangerous than to face persecution by those who think they're serving God by attacking you.

Of course, this still happens in churches. Many pastors and even church members have faced horrible situations brought on by misguided people who saw themselves as standing for the truth.

But in reality, they were being used by the evil one to wreak havoc upon God's church. It still happens and it will happen until Jesus comes. Friendly fire is still fire.

But Jesus sends us in the midst of this. Jesus sends his spirit to help us. He helps us in three other ways than we've already talked about.

[5 : 55] He says he will convict the world. He will guide us into truth. And he will glorify Jesus. I'm sure this will help us in our witness too.

All of these things will help us to be more faithful witnesses. And that's what's needed right now. Family, right now, in the world that we live in, it's always been needed.

But I'm telling you, I just, I sense a heightening. Especially in our own country. That what is needed right now are faithful, Christ-centered, kingdom-focused witnesses for Jesus.

Who are walking with him and not giving in to the cultural chaos and cultural confusion. We're needed. Because our world and our country is full of darkness and deceit, narcissism, hedonism, and death.

But Jesus has come that we may know the truth and have life. And the light of the world will shine through his people as the spirit of God works in us.

[7 : 01] So let's be that people. First of all, in our passage, verses 4 through 7, Jesus says, we need the helper. Now, John has an interesting play of words here.

I just noticed this. In verse 1 and verse 4, our Lord says, I have said these things to you. All these things. He said, I've said it twice. Then in verse 12, he says, I still have many things to say to you.

Then in our text in verse 4, he says, I did not say these things to you. Do you see a pattern? Let's apply this now, because it hit me.

Jesus puts the emphasis for our lives as his disciples on us knowing and understanding his words.

He's still speaking. His words. He has many things to say to his church, his people, and the spirit caused these things to be written down.

[8 : 12] We'll come back to that later a little bit more, but just keep this in mind. Never fall for any teaching that minimizes the importance of God's word. I keep running into stuff like this every so often.

You know, y'all so cognitive. You're so intellectual. Yes. Yes. Because God gave us a book.

And this book requires intellect. It requires thought. It requires... You can't just read this like you read in the Reader's Digest or read in the newspaper and put it down.

No. This thing grabs you. Why? Because it's the words of Jesus still speaking. When you come to this book, yes, your mind should explode.

But listen, the mind is the gateway to the heart. When your mind explodes with God's truth, your heart, and that means your whole being is going to light up and be transformed. That's why Paul said twice, renew your mind.

[9 : 19] It's the gateway to the heart. And we need God's truth listening. When you come to the scriptures, just take trust me on this. Try it. Listen.

Say, Jesus, speak to me. Because he is speaking. And he has much to tell you. About you. About him.

And about what he's doing in the world. He has much to say to us. But we have to bring our hearts, our minds, our intellect to the word.

And not be ashamed to be called frozen chosen. Because we think deeply about the word of God. Amen. Somebody say amen.

Please, just give me one. I'm just talking, you know. Now, Jesus says right now in this passage that he's been holding out on the disciples.

[10 : 17] He says, I didn't tell you this stuff before. He's been holding out. It was a need to know kind of thing. And what he has been sharing from chapter 13 on is now needed information.

They didn't even know it back in the day. A year from him. Remember, three years they walked with Jesus. And year one and year two, they didn't even know this stuff. But as he got towards the cross.

Remember, this is the night of his betrayal. This is the night where he will be arrested and crucified. Now, it's time. I got to fill you in. I got to tell you what I didn't tell you. And that's what he's doing in these chapters.

Here's another thing to think about. God does not tell you everything at once. I know. I want God to tell me the end from the beginning.

If I do this, Lord, what's going to happen? If I take that job. Somebody help me out. If you take that job, you want to know, Lord, what's going to happen?

[11 : 23] And here's the thing. I stopped by on my way to heaven to tell you. He's not going to tell you. There are some things you will never know in this life.

And there are some things you must wait to know. And when you need to know it, God will make sure you hear it. Now, you need to believe it when he speaks, though.

But he'll make sure. These disciples need to know now, because Jesus was leaving, he had been performing the work that the spirit will now continue. The spirit, it seems, is functioning on a divine timetable.

He cannot inaugurate the saving reign of God's kingdom until Jesus has died, risen, and been exalted to the Father's right hand.

That's when Jesus said, I will pour out the Father. The Bible shows us that the Father and the Son both send the Holy Spirit. But the timetable is important.

[12 : 27] Jesus must go through this life and end this life and ascend to his own glory. I can't wait until we get to chapter 17. Oh, my gosh. Anyway.

So he's repeating what he said in chapter 14, because they need further comfort. He's returning to the Father. And Jesus says, well, you seem to believe it, yet they're still very sad.

Well, wouldn't you be sad? Don't look down on the disciples. I know I want to do that sometimes because they do things really silly. They really do sometimes go, what is wrong?

What were you thinking? And then I realize I'm them. And that's not always a good feeling, but it's okay. I'm in good company.

Don't look. Their master is leaving. Can you imagine? Imagine this. You've lived with the Lord Jesus Christ for three years. Just imagine. Put yourself in that spot.

[13:24] You've seen him do things that no one else could do but God. You've heard his preaching. Oh, my goodness. I know you all think Kevin Smith is a great preacher.

I know. But Jesus is a great preacher. He's the best preacher. You've heard him preach. You've watched him teach. You've seen the love and compassion.

And you saw how you've had meetings. You had meetings with Jesus. Prayer meetings with Jesus. I mean, he's rebuked you on occasion.

He's corrected you. He's shown you things. And now he says he's leaving you. I don't know about you, but I think I'd be crushed.

If Jesus said that to us now, I'm done with y'all. Well, I got going on a trip. I can't help you. I think we all just, we just crumble into the dust.

[14:20] These brothers are hurting. Their master is leaving. But once again, Jesus is assuring and comforting them and us that it is not only necessary but advantageous for us that he bodily leaves us.

In order for the church to fulfill the Lord's purpose for us, we need more than Jesus beside us. We need Jesus in us.

And that's what the spirit of God is or the spirit of Christ. He is Jesus in us. The spirit of Christ. And we can't have both.

We can't have at this point. Isn't this great? The new heavens and new earth. We're going to have Jesus with us and his spirit in us at the same time.

Right now, we have this spirit in us, but Jesus bodily not with us. Ah, but it's coming, y'all. Get ready, get ready. The best situation for us is that the helper would be in us.

[15:26] The disciples know or they think they know what is best for them. But they don't.

They think it's Jesus. No. Even remember when Peter rebukes Jesus, the Lord's having a, I guess Peter thought the Lord was having a moment. A moment of melancholy.

A moment of depression. And Jesus talks about the fact that he will be killed. And die and rise again. And Peter says, be there far from you, Lord.

Remember that? No, not you. Because he knew better. No, Lord, that can't happen to you. You're Jesus. And we always tend to think when we get in our heads that we know better than God.

We really know the best way. God needs to get on our program. Because we got it all figured out. We got the timing figured out. We know exactly when it's supposed to happen. What's supposed to be done. And we got it all figured out.

[16:25] But we don't. We don't. We really don't. So we're just like them. We pray to God telling him what we want. And what he's supposed to do.

And when he's supposed to do it. But I love the fact that Proverbs 14 says this. There is a way that seems right to a man. But his end is the way of death. Always remember that.

If you're not depending upon the Lord's wisdom. But your own wisdom. Be careful. Because you may find yourself walking. In something you don't want to walk in.

And we certainly can't trust the wisdom of the world. All because you saw it on TV. Or on social media. Don't mean it's for you.

We have to be discerning. We have to step back and say hold it now. Is this what God wants for his people? For me? For his children? Or does he have something better?

[17:23] And I think you'll find a lot of times. He has something better. The calling and mission of Jesus is too big for us. We can't fulfill the great commission.

We can't glorify Jesus. We can't do anything. We can't even keep ourselves on the right path. We need the spirit of God. And he sends him.

That's why he's here. To fulfill the work of Christ in us. You know the old saying. Some help is no help. Well that might be true.

When you trust in yourselves and other people. But when you trust in the spirit of God. We have the greatest help we could ever ask for. His help is real help.

So are you willing to trust that Jesus knows what is best for you. Even if it doesn't look good at first. It didn't look good. When Jesus said he was going.

[18:24] And then they're going to see this. In a few hours. They're going to see this. He's going to be arrested. And flogged. And beaten. And tried. And crucified. That did not look good.

They're going to be depressed. And scared. Keep in mind. They go running for their lives. After the crucifixion. Because they think they're next. You can't follow a crucified rebel.

And not think the authorities aren't coming for you too. This looks bad. It's going to look worse in a little while for them. And yet. And yet it was the best path.

They had to go through this. They had to go through this moment of sorrow. We'll talk about this next time. Of sorrow. Before they could have joy. They had to go through the fear.

And the uncertainty. And the doubt. It was the path. That God had mapped out. It looked. Not like a good idea. But yet.

[19:25] It was the path. That God had mapped out. Do you believe. You have been given the spirit. Do you believe then. That he wants to guide you.

In the way that you need to go. Even if. The path may look a little dismal. It's still the way of the Lord. And all you who trust in Jesus.

Let's be clear. Because I know this teaching out there. All you who trust in Jesus. Have the Holy Spirit. There is no need of a second blessing. You got all the blessing you need.

When the spirit came into your life. Baptizing you into the body of Christ. Regenerating. Making you alive. You have the power of God. The spirit of God.

In you right now. And he is awesome. Romans 8.9. You who are not in the flesh. But in the spirit. If in fact the spirit of God. Dwells in you.

[20:23] Anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ. Does not belong to him. So if you. Don't have the spirit. Then you don't belong to Jesus. Put your faith in Jesus.

Depend on the spirit. As you walk with Jesus. To be the help you need. When you need it. Second thing I want you to notice. Jesus sends the spirit. To convict the world through the church.

Verses 8 through 11. Now he gets more specific. About the work of the spirit. He doesn't tell us everything he says. But what he says is certainly enough. Since the spirit is given to the church.

This is what he will do. Through the church. He convicts the world concerning sin. Righteousness. And judgment. Now the word convict is pretty cool.

It means he will expose. He will rebuke. He will refute. He will show your fault. He will call you to account. That's what the word convict.

[21 : 22] Has in its meaning. And as you can imagine. That's not always pleasant. I hope you never. Are so unfortunate.

As to be prosecuted for a crime. I guarantee you. If it does happen. And you go before the judge. Or the jury. You are hoping to be acquitted.

Nobody wants to be. Convicted. Convicted. But conviction before God. Is the only way to repentance. And change.

Sinners do not change without conviction. Life is good. I'm going to. You know. I'm going to keep on going. Life is good. But once you are convicted.

You realize something. Is wrong. Conviction. Must be received. Admit it. So that change. Takes place.

[22 : 19] That's called repentance. Right. But here's the thing. There are people in our churches. Who love for the preacher. To step on their toes. Ooh.

Pastor. You got us good today. But they have no intention of changing. See that's false conviction.

I'm not saying that everyone who says that. Means that. I'm not saying that. I'm just saying there are people. Who just like being told. Who like getting stomped on. They love it.

When they feel. They feel like. Ooh. Man. Yeah. That was for me. But it really wasn't. That's false conviction.

And I've seen it in every church I've ever preached in. People just like it. Now there are some people who like it. Because they really want to change. That's the majority of people. I believe that.

[23 : 15] The majority of folks say. Man. That stepped on my toes. And they're going home to pray. They're going home to say. Lord. Thank you. Amen to that. But there's a false type. Because false conviction is very dangerous.

Because it makes you feel spiritual. When you're not. Spiritual meaning of the spirit. Having the spirit working. When you're not. False conviction.

Like false faith. It's very dangerous. It's a self-deception. And maybe even hypocrisy. Hence the first thing the spirit does.

Notice in the text. And he convicts the world of sin. Well the word sin literally means to miss the mark. That's what it means. It's like you're. Using my favorite analogy.

If I'm playing disc golf. I'm in the woods. And I've got to go around trees. There's a line. I draw a line in my mind.

[24 : 14] Where I want my disc to go. Here's the tree. I might want to go a little low. Under the branches. And around the turn. That's the line.

Now most of the time. I hit the tree. I miss the mark. I miss the line.

And when you miss the mark. You get hurt. My discs get lost. They end up in the river. Lost to the other. Never mind. That happens.

When you miss the mark. You get messed up. Bad things happen. When you miss the mark. That's what sin is. And keep in mind. What Jesus is saying here. All of what he's saying.

Is going to come true right away. We can talk about us for a minute. But hold on. Let's go back to them. Jesus says. The spirit will come. To convict the world of sin.

[25 : 09] The day of Pentecost. 40 days or so. After his resurrection. The day of Pentecost comes. And what happens?

Peter preaches. And you heard me read it today. They cry out. Brothers. What shall we do? See that's conviction. The spirit of God. Peter told them.

You killed Jesus. You didn't believe in him. You didn't trust in him. And so now. The spirit comes to say. Do you. You.

You really did. Because people can hear the gospel. They can hear all the stuff about Jesus. And still go. Nothing.

But when the spirit of God moves. People are convicted. That's why you should never be afraid. To share the gospel with anybody. I don't care how bad you think they are.

[26 : 05] I don't care how messed up they are. I don't even care if they're in a coma. Because here's the truth. You don't know what people can hear. In a coma. Whenever I get beside someone's bedside. I don't care what.

I tell them about Jesus. Because I don't know what they can hear. Because the spirit of God. Can come and convict them. And right there on their bed. As they're saying their last. Breathing their last breath.

Saying their last words. They can come to Christ. And listen. If that's true for the near dead. It's true for those. Who are sitting next to you. On the bus. Or in the cubicles.

Or in your classes. It's true right there. If you will open your mouth. And be used. God. Not you. The spirit of God. Can bring conviction. And that's what Jesus promised.

The second thing I want you to notice here. And I got to run on. Because time's running away from me again. And Jesus says again. That the spirit will also convict the world of righteousness.

[27 : 05] Because I go to the Father. Now what's the connection here? Remember. The people he preached to. Did not believe Jesus was of God at all.

They didn't believe he was from the Father. They actually attacked him for calling himself the Son of God. They had no understanding.

And they looked at him as a guilty criminal. But when Jesus goes to the Father. That vindicates him.

When he rises from the dead. And ascends into heaven. That's the vindication. That he is who he said he was. And that's when. And that's back in Acts 2. When Peter's. Day of Pentecost.

When Peter is preaching. You should read that sermon again. When Peter is preaching. He tells him. That death could not hold him. It was not possible. For death to keep his hold on him.

[28 : 04] That he was risen from the dead. Because that's what the Spirit of God. And the Father willed. Peter. Pointed right to the fact. That Jesus is vindicated by his resurrection.

And ascension. To glory. Well. The last thing he says is. He convicts the world of judgment. Because the ruler of this world.

By the way. That's small R. And he's talking about the devil. The devil. Is judged. At the cross. When. I can imagine.

Hell. Hell was going. Well actually. Hell wasn't really. We say that. But the devil does not rule in hell. He's destined for it. It's a mystery.

It's Dante's Inferno. We got it all confused. Anyway. But the forces of darkness. Like trained seals. Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. We got rid of him.

[29 : 03] He's finally gone. Yeah. Ah. But on the cross, Paul says that he was canceling the record of debt that stood against us with his legal demands.

This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him.

The father defeats the forces of darkness as the son goes to the cross. He goes up and the devil comes down.

And all them that follow him, whether they know it or not, are destined for that judgment too. There's no getting around it.

The gospel is good news. But it's good news because it's bad news too. The bad news is judgment is coming. And the good news is you don't have to stand before God without a lawyer.

[30 : 11] And the best lawyer there is is named Jesus. He's your only lawyer. He's the only lawyer allowed into that courtroom when you and I stand before God. And lastly, Jesus sends the spirit to lead us into truth for his glory.

Verses 12 through 15. They couldn't handle more of the truth, Jesus says. I got more to tell you, but you can't handle it. That shows spiritual growth. There are things, remember I said earlier, he don't tell you everything.

But here's the truth. He's going to grow you. He's going to mature you so that you can handle stuff you couldn't handle five years ago. So today you can handle it.

Stuff you couldn't hear. You read it ten times and didn't hear it. But all of a sudden you read it and it jumps off the page. Because now you can handle it. Now you can. Jesus is always walking with us.

The spirit of truth is always walking with us to guide us into all truth. Now again, all these things started with the apostles. But now we who come to the book that they have written, when we come to the word of God, we too experience the guidance of the spirit into all truth.

[31 : 23] And I don't know about you, family, but I need wisdom. I need wisdom. I need it when my kids were little. I need it now that they're adults. I still need wisdom in how to guide them and how to speak to them.

I need wisdom to be a pastor. I need wisdom for everything. I need wisdom.

If you're not diving into the book of God where the spirit of God is speaking, then you will be sucker punched time and time again.

And you'll be led into not truth, but into error. The spirit wants to guide you. But he's going to do it on his terms. Not your terms, not my terms.

His terms is that we trust in the Savior and come to the book to hear his words so that we know the truth.

[32 : 45] And the truth sets us free. His truth. True truth. Not my truth. His truth.

Well, I just ran through that and hope that was helpful. The work of the spirit is profound in us, isn't it? One place we see the work of the spirit in a profound way is in the history of the African American church.

If you study the African American church, I had to do this after seminary because I wasn't taught anything in seminary. Two different seminaries. And not hardly anything.

So I had to read up on my own. Notice this. If you know the history, the spirit gave an oppressed people the ability to believe the gospel that their oppressors preached but did not fully live.

That's mind-boggling, okay? The fact that any of those slaves believed the gospel is mind-boggling when the people preaching it to them were so messed up.

[33 : 49] And treating them like they were nothing. But yet, that's what happened. The church, and when the church was born, the church was sustained through mandated illiteracy.

People, slaves weren't always being, most weren't being taught to read. How could you, so they couldn't read the book. People then, they didn't want them reading the book. Mandated illiteracy.

Cross burnings. Church burnings. And bombings. And yet, the black church thrived through the lynching of their clergy whom God used to convict the hearts and consciences of racist individuals.

The destruction of men in the black community, in the church black community through threats and death. And yet, that church thrived.

It thrived. And I'm going to talk about this next time. But it thrived with joy. It thrived with power. It, it, it, it, it, the civil rights movement is a movement of the middle class black church.

[34 : 51] Without the black church, there is no civil rights anything. And we would still be under Jim Crow in this, in this, in the South, possibly. And this country would be so bereft.

America would be so weakened. But look, that church, that's why people around the world, I'm not making this up, are studying the African American church to know how to thrive under oppression.

Even in our country. Because we're recognizing that right now, as Bible-believing Christians, we're on the outs. We used to, people, America used to love us.

Now, we're on the outs. We can learn from the African American church, how do you live under pressure?

How do we live when we're being marginalized? Unwetralized. And what, how did that happen? The Spirit of God. Black people ain't better than white people or Asian people.

[35 : 58] It's the Spirit of God. The Word of God. Coming alive in the people. Sustaining them. And He'll do the same thing for us today. And we need Him to do it. Well, that's it.

We need the Spirit to guide our lives, brothers and sisters. And I pray you will pray constantly that the Spirit will come upon us, revive us, help us, that He will guide us into more of Christ and use us to convict the world.

Because unless the world is convicted, it will not change. People will not change. Conviction is necessary. And that's what the Spirit does.

He convicts that He may convert. And if you want to see people converted, you can't be afraid to tell them what the Lord says. And let Him guide your life.

You know, I like driving. My dad was a great driver. Smitty could drive. I mean, he was amazing. He had cool with driving. His hat would be on. He had to lean.

[37 : 04] And my dad was, you see my dad coming, man. You just went, wow, wow. I love to drive like my dad. But here's the thing about driving. You know, if you're going someplace you've never been, you know, you've never been there before, well, there are a couple things you can do.

You can drive yourself and use the GPS and hope it doesn't land you in a cul-de-sac somewhere. Or Daniel Rakes can tell you about this. He and I were looking for a disc golf course in Georgia.

We ended up in front of a field. It wasn't it. So you can trust the GPS or you can do this. You can let someone else drive who knows where they're going.

The Spirit of God knows where he's going. Let him drive. Stop trying to take the wheel from him. Let him drive.

And he knows how to get you home. Amen? Amen. Father, bless your name. God, our steps. Fill us with your Spirit. Thank you that we can never lose him.

[38:07] You will never take him from us. But Lord, you talk about filling. And Lord, we pray that he would come upon us in a powerful way to empower us for the work you've called us to, that Jesus might be glorified.

In his name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.