

**Reading: John 16: 7 - 15 and Acts 2: 1 - 4.**

**John 16:7:** "It is for your good that I am going away"

*The sermon outline of a sermon preached on Pentecost Sunday 2012 at Centurion West Presbyterian Church.*

Jesus announced that he is leaving. When the disciples hear this, they "weep and mourn" (Jn 16:20). But Jesus says, "It is for your good that I am going away" (Jn 16:7). The word for "good" here means *profitable, beneficial and to your advantage*. The disciples are better off with Jesus in heaven than with Jesus on earth. The disciples' "grief will turn to joy" (Jn 16:20).

Jesus said that their grief will turn to joy, because (Jn 16:7) *"I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you."*

If Jesus did not leave for heaven, the Spirit would not have come to earth in a new way. When Jesus goes to heaven, the Spirit comes to us. It is as simple as that.

We want to look at the good of Christ's going away from the perspective of Pentecost. Our text raises two points. Firstly, **the Spirit convicts the world**. Secondly, **the Spirit instructs the Church**.

### **I. The Spirit convicts the world**

Firstly, we see the Spirit convicting the world. Jesus says: (Jn 16:8) *When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment...*

We are not being told that the Spirit comes to the world, rather that the Spirit "will convict the world." *The Spirit comes to the church, not to the world*. As Jesus says in our text, (Jn 16:7) *But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.*

"**To you.**" Jesus is talking to his disciples. The Spirit comes to them, not to the world.

*The Spirit's work of convicting the world is done in and through the church*. The Spirit does not work in a vacuum! Just as Jesus had to have a body to do his work on earth (in community with his disciples), so the Spirit needs a body to accomplish his ministry on earth; *and, that body is the church*.

The church is the hands and feet of the Spirit. We are his tools, his instruments and he lives in us. So we have the responsibility to evangelize. It means we have to reach the unbelievers who are part of our lives. We need to witness to them and pray for them. What we do, as inspiration of the Spirit, is important. It is imperative!

Remember what happened at Pentecost. It was the Jewish feast of both the First Fruits and of the receiving of the Law of God. The Spirit fell on Peter and the other disciples and Peter began to preach. *And the preaching of the Word convicted those who listen of breaking the law of God. And when they repented, they became the first fruits of the Christian Pentecost, the first of many who were saved*. The Spirit uses the church to speak the Word.

Secondly, we need to take note of three words. **The first word is "convict."** The Spirit "will convict the world" (Jn 16:8). "*Convict*" is a legal word that means *to bring to light, to expose and to convince*.

*Then the word "guilt."* We are told that *the Spirit convicts the world of guilt in three areas: sin, righteousness, and judgment*. Finally Jesus calls the Spirit: "*the Counselor*." In the original language this word is used for *legal assistants who plead a cause or present a case*. An advocate.

It is legal language, as is used in a court of law: *Believers are the witnesses, the Holy Spirit is the prosecuting advocate, and the unsaved are the accused. But, the purpose is not to condemn but to rehabilitate - to save.*

Firstly, the Spirit, through the witness of the church, "convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin" (Jn 16:8). Not just any sin, but "in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me" (Jn 16:9) Convicting of the *sin of unbelief, of not believing in Jesus, is the work of the Spirit.*

Through the witness of the church about Jesus, the Spirit brings to light the world's guilt in regards to not receiving Jesus in faith.

Secondly, the Spirit, through the witness of the church, "convicts the world of guilt in regard to ... righteousness" (Jn 16:8).

Jesus says: (Jn 16:10) *in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer ... It is Christ's righteousness that we need to be convicted of.* The Spirit convicts the world of guilt by showing us Christ's righteousness. The Pharisees and the Jews were saying, when Jesus was hung on the cross and punished, that *Jesus was the worst kind of criminal.* They were saying Jesus was wicked and deserved to be crucified.

But the Resurrection and the Ascension, are saying about Jesus, that **God has received him whom the world would not receive.** God's exaltation of Jesus shows that he is perfect Lamb of God.

Through the witness of the church, the Spirit exposes the world's guilt of not accepting Jesus as the Righteous and Perfect, Holy Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

Thirdly, the Spirit, through the witness of the church, "convicts the world of guilt in regard to ... judgment" (Jn 16:8). Listen to what Jesus says:

(Jn 16:11) and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world (the devil) now stands condemned.

The world thinks that it was Jesus who was judged and condemned. That it was Jesus who received a sentence, and that Satan won the victory. But *when Jesus suffered and died and rose, it was Satan who was defeated.* Satan has lost the war and he knows it. Jesus is victorious.

On the first Pentecost Sunday through the Spirit, ***the three thousand were convicted of their sin of unbelief in Jesus, they were convicted of the righteousness of Christ, and they were convicted of the judgment of Satan.***

On the first Pentecost Sunday *the Spirit grew the church by convicting and converting the lost. Yet, the apostles were not bystanders. The job of the apostles, and now of the church, is to witness. The job of the Spirit is to convict, to bring to light, to convert.*

Our text says: "It is for your good that I am going away" (Jn 16:7) Enemies become friends of Christ and of the Gospel. The church grows and the kingdom is advanced. And God is glorified.

'We are not called to be the judge, the prosecutor, or even the defense attorney! "You will be my WITNESSES" - Rick Warren.'

## II The Spirit teaches and guides the Church

We also learn from our text that the Spirit is instructing the Church.

We need to hear what Jesus says in our Bible reading for today:

(Jn 16:13) *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*

The Spirit firstly, "*will remind you of everything I have said to you*" (Jn 14:26). It is in the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, where we find what Jesus said. Secondly, "*he will guide you into all truth*" (Jn 16:13) This refers to the Scriptures, both the Old and the New Testaments, that witness about Jesus Christ.

We are being told that the Spirit works through the Bible. This is one of the heresies of new age spirituality, that there is a revelation beyond what the Bible says. But the *Spirit works through the Bible. As Jesus puts it, "He will not speak on his own ..." (Jn 14:13). The Spirit does not speak apart from the Father and the Son. He does not bring a different message or a new message again. He reinforces the message he inspired in the Holy Scriptures.*

**The Spirit ministers through the Bible.** Through the Spirit God preserved and shared his Word. Through the Bible, we receive the ministry of the Spirit for the church. The Bible does not help those who do not believe. This is the gift of God, through the work of the Spirit, to the Church, that the Church may be his witnesses to the lost.

The purpose of this ministry of the Spirit is: to teach, to remind, to guide, to tell. The Bible is not first of all a history book and it is not about science. *The Spirit's goal is our growth in knowledge of Jesus Christ, and God's unique salvation plan, and the coming of his complete dominion. This is taught by the Spirit through applying the Bible in our lives.*

**In closing: (Jn 16:14) He will bring glory to me ...**

"He will testify about me." "He will bring glory to me." The Spirit's work is meant to lead us to Christ and to the Gospel. We are given the Word to see and know and glorify Jesus Christ. We are given the Word to meet Jesus. Unless we meet Jesus, the Spirit's goal is not being accomplished. "*It is for your good that I am going away*" (Jn 16:7). The Spirit convicts the unbelieving world. The Spirit teaches and guides the church.

This is the Word of God.

Thanks be to God for his Word.

Amen.