



“...convict the World”

John 16:1-15

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at JF Believers Church
in Menomonie, Wisc
on October 21, 2018

John 16:1-15 *"These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. 2 "They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. 3 "And these things they will do to you because they have not known the*

Father nor Me. 4 "But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. 5 "But now I go away 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 depart, I will send Him to you. 8 "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 "of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 "of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 "of 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 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, 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 tell you things to come. 14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

Repeatedly the apostles found themselves lost in the middle of the conversation. The ‘train had left the station’ without these guys it seemed, and Jesus had to so often clarify and explain much of what He had already said. There is no argument that *at least at this point* these boys were a bit “thick.” While Jesus was fully human, it is a good thing that He was also fully God. For it strikes me that some real supernatural patience and understanding would have been called for when discipling these guys! But Jesus hung in there because he knew something at this point that the apostles definitely did *not* grasp, and that was that someone was soon coming into their lives that would practically and profoundly change their daily living. He taught them, but He knew that data alone would never translate into real change and successfully living. He was “building the vehicle” and the petrol was coming that would empower and move them forward.

He began by telling them the “why” behind what He was instructing. His desire was that they continue in their walk, and that their spiritual lives would not be sabotaged. That through outside influences they would not be caused to “stumble.”

The first section of chapter 16 continues in the same vein of the latter half of chapter 15. Verse 2 is especially stark and has vivid impact upon our lives. What we gather from that statement is that the onslaught against us...*against true biblical Christianity*, will not just come from *outside* the traditional church, but from within it as well. They will attempt to throw you ‘out of the club’ to be sure, and many churches are already experiences such if they belong to a denomination. This statement from Christ goes so far as to declare that there will be people who will literally *kill* you, and in doing so believe that it was God’s will and a service unto Him. There was certainly a time in my life that such a scenario seemed far away and extremist. But not anymore. I’m not sure that the whole of verse 2 couldn’t be manifested today in many situations. But Christ takes the final shot back saying that those who do such things do so “*because they do not know me.*” A judgement and verdict 2000 years before the act. Sweet. That will make you a Calvinist! “...*when the time comes, ... remember that I told you of them.*”

Throughout scripture, in various ways and various places, we are given the warning to be careful that we do not fall from the faith. We can gather that we are given this message in hopes we will not ‘stumble,’ so apparently we **are** indeed able to do so.

Mt 13:21 *"Yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles."*

Mt 26:31 *Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: "I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered."*

Ps 17:5 *"Uphold my steps in Your paths, That my footsteps may not slip."*

History tells us how each apostle would eventually die brutal and deeply sacrificial deaths except John, and even that wasn't because they failed to try to put him down. They would be the first of thousands of Christian martyrs that would follow. So Jesus wasn't telling them that life would be rosy and they would be well received. The warning herein was not that they should avoid those guys or they might get hurt. No, they were *going* to get hurt. No doubt about that. Christ's concern was that they didn't fall away because of the hurt...because of the trials and persecution.

That reality, as well as the reality of faithful servants of God giving their lives for God and kingdom, is something that flies in the face of our American version of Christianity. We have instead been convinced that the whole idea of Christianity is for me to decide to be a Christian believer and then spend the rest of my life pampering and polishing myself up like a vintage car I keep in my garage to work on. Only on the weekends of course, between all of the other worldly interests and endeavors I am pursuing.

We tend to be like the apostles in verse 5 and not ask the crucial questions. Questions like "Where does such principles and concepts get their backing? On what basis are we living out Christianity in such a way?" Questions we *should* be asking always. Because such thinking and practice is not **biblical** Christianity. It's not what Jesus taught. We have been saved rather to praise the Son, glorify the Father, and further His kingdom. We have been redeemed to be like Christ. And there is no argument that He was a radical to be sure.

Jesus was warning them what we already know: a lot of folks are going to crash and burn before they get to the finish line and will simply fail to complete the race. They "*departed from us, showing that they never were a part of us.*" (1 Jn 2:19) The greatest danger the disciples would confront from the opposition of the world was not *death*, but *apostasy*. Few of us will actually die for our faith, but many of us will turn back before we finish. And many more of us will try avoiding or even turning away from radical *discipleship* and still hold onto salvation. According to scripture, this of course is impossible and a spiritual lie, but we will try it anyway, then spend our lives spiritually impotent and will do nothing for God or anyone other than ourselves, all the while still believing we will joyously spend eternity in heaven doing what we never wanted to do here.

The term 'God' is today used by cults and false religions, even A.A., and through broad strokes it is essentially rendered meaningless. It's *Jesus* that they want to go away. And Jesus knew that was coming. He knew that people would still want God, but they wouldn't want *Him*, and they won't want those of us who believe in Him and all He taught! People want a nice, comfortable suburban Christianity, not a radical die-to-myself and go-to-war faith that Christ is calling us to in His Word. They will just flat out reject obedience to those things, and they will hate you for reminding them and convicting them. One of Satan's greatest method's today is to counterfeit the truth. He causes people to blindly convince themselves they are worshipping God when in truth they are worshipping themselves, and the world and its systems. Systems that notoriously program in a rejection of service, worship, holiness, discipline and Jesus-style living.

It is ironic to say the least, how believers want to hold that the Holy Spirit, who never speaks of Himself **but always of Christ**, would somehow fill **our** being so **we** can focus instead on ourselves and not on Jesus Christ.

Jesus voices what seems to be almost a disappointment in verse five. No one was asking where He was going. The apostles were concerned that Jesus was going away, but it appears they were concerned only in how it would affect them personally. The road ahead sounded really rough, and now they would be expected to travel it without their superhero Jesus?

We all have those moments of stark lucid realization of the reality of this thing we call Christianity. Many will reject Christ at that point, claiming that such was more than we bargained for, more than we anticipated costing. When things don't work out like we think they should, it is then that we decide whether Jesus is in charge or we are. Many disciples left Jesus when he said some hard things in John chapter six, many more have left Him since when He has said some hard things to them.

Yet if we would simply *listen*, we would hear His voice and know that He "has our backs." We wonder how all this will be done...how will we make it through what seems to be impossible odds. And Jesus' response is "I got an App for that..." His name is the Holy Spirit and you can download Him for free...

While we may grasp the idea that the Holy Spirit convicts individuals of sin, this passage goes beyond that. It says the Holy Spirit **convicts the world**. Once again, we find Jesus using that word that speaks of more than just the earth or even the people. He uses the word "*Cosmos*"...encompassing the whole of everything here...all the people, the possessions and the systems they promote.

Today, the Holy Spirit of God moves amongst us. He sees everything, hears everything, knows everything. Our thoughts...our motivations...our righteous works and our sins. He communes and communicates on an intimate and personal level. Without words or verbal exchange he speaks and leads directly to our hearts, minds, and our very souls. He brings the understanding of our sin, and thus our subsequent guilt, making us conscious of our mortality and the coming judgment for each of us personally. Man refused Jesus, but the Holy Spirit's presence exists as a witness to their crime. They can "turn off Christ" but not the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is a convicting and convincing ministry. He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and operates on multiple levels and through multiple mediums. He works through the Word of God and through preaching, and thus hopefully, through me as a pastor/preacher/teacher. Romans 10:14 says "*How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?*" Thus, whether I like it or not, my job, at least in part, is to convict men of their sins through preaching in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. That, I have found, can be very unpleasant for me because I can't figure out a way to do that without creating pain. And that can often make me a not-so-popular guy. If you receive my words, I am received as a blessed friend; if you reject them, I become your enemy.

The Holy Spirit will equip and empower for dynamic living, but such a "plug in" comes with a secondary caveat. And that is the He will also "convict." That word in the original speaks of reproving, rebuking, convincing, exposing and declaring our guilt and sin. It means to "shine the light on." To "*call to account*," to *show one his fault*, to *demand an explanation*. Certainly when we paint the picture *that way*, it is no mystery why the world will so utterly and emphatically reject and oppose any and all manifest of such an entity.

The Spirit has a way of exposing the truth...the "facts" of sin. In His presence, there is the dawning...the "awakening" that sin will take you farther than you want to go, cost you more than you want to pay, and keep you longer than you wanted to stay. And suddenly and inexplicably you find yourself standing at the crossroads of your life. Believe *and follow*, and salvation plus blessing is yours. Reject, and you go down a road of lies, denial, division, and *pain*. **Receive**, and we are humbled before the glorious Redeemer. **Reject**, and pride becomes our controller; often blinding us for the rest of our lives.

Jesus had so much more He could tell them, but it seems their heads were swimming at this point. Or maybe they just weren't spiritually in a place yet to digest what He **could** say. Thankfully, it seems God is always

careful to present His master plan in a linear “step-by-step” method. He does this no doubt so *one*, our heads won’t explode trying to wrap our minds around it all. And *two*, so our maturity level will always match our spiritual “military orders.” Meaning God doesn’t ask a spiritual 8 year old to build Him a rocket.

Jesus, speaking of the Holy Spirit, says in verse seven, “*I will send Him to you.*” Wow. Only God could do that! The “**I AM**” says “***I will.***” Not a maybe, no ifs, ands, or buts. Just “***I will.***” We can “take it to the bank.”

We are told that the Spirit of Truth will guide us *into* the truth. Guide us. Which means we must actually follow Him in. When we stand in the fullness of the Spirit of God, we know the truth. That’s how even a new believer can ‘smell a rat’ when confronted with false doctrine. As John 8:32 tells us, “...*you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*” Such a position is readily evident to those around us in our living and the peace we exude. When we reject the Holy Spirit, *and we often do*, we stand outside of the truth, and we are *not* free and we *do not* have the truth. What we have in its place is confusion and pride. That position is also quite evident to others. When we are not clearly led by the Holy Spirit and live within His presence, we stand in doubt, in inconsistency, and in the dark not knowing which way to move. It’s a joyless place to be, and one fraught with danger.

He, *the Holy Spirit*, as well as we who are filled with that Spirit, glorify God, because of that presence. And, *get this*, all that God has belongs to Christ, and all that Christ has, *the Holy Spirit declares it to us*. Do you get that? The Holy Spirit declares to us God and the things of God. But once again, no Holy Spirit, no truth. This is why it is so evident when a life is led by the Spirit! As it is evident when a life is not.

Jesus had been warning His apostles concerning the trials that would be coming. The persecutions from outside the religious world, and the persecutions that would come from *within* the religious establishment. Yet when Lord was speaking, He was telling the anguished apostles not to be troubled. The irony! The One who was soon going to face death by crucifixion is not trying to *be* comforted, but rather is busy comforting others. What an unselfish Savior! Jesus knew He “had to go” but He also knew that they...*that we*, need a “helper.” A “comforter.” A crutch to get us through. So He was not going to leave us alone.

It was nearly time now for the climax of Christ’s earthly ministry. Three years had gone by so quickly! It probably seemed just like yesterday that the curtain was raised and they had heard those immortal words “*come and follow me...and I will make you fishers of men.*” When they followed Christ that day and He turned to them they asked Him “*Master...where are you going?*” Oh, if they had had any idea what they were asking that day. For Jesus replied, “...*come and see.*” Indeed now they had...

The men who sat with Jesus that day had surrendered themselves and their lives for the kingdom of God. Theirs was not a ‘part-time faith’, it was everything to them! While there may have been many questions about life which arose in their hearts, they knew one thing for sure, just as we should, that for those who call themselves Christians, Christ and faith come first. All of life’s decisions and directions were to be filtered through the mantra of, “*seek first the kingdom of God...*” because they understood something we can’t seem to get through our heads, “*all the rest will be added, ...all the rest will be taken care.*”

They had received the call to *follow* Jesus, and then they received the call to *serve* Jesus. Jesus made no attempt to soft-peddle the cost or the high standard. Despite the good that was done and the glory that was given the kingdom of God through their lives, it didn’t matter to the Pharisees who attacked them, and such facts matter little to the modern Pharisees that attack us today.

The Holy Spirit is “convicting the world” today, and we are clearly in it. But for us He is also a helper to protect us and equip us for the journey ahead. Jesus was just making sure that we make it through that journey. John 17:15 “*I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.*” It’s our choice to try to make it alone...