

John 16:4b-15

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[0 : 00] And our scripture reading today is from the Gospel of John, chapter 16, verses 4b through 15. And if you can, please stand for the reading of God's word.

I did not say these things to you from the beginning because I was with you. But now I'm going to him who sent me and none of you asks me, where are you going? But because I've 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 the truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak.

[1 : 07] 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 away what is mine and declare it to you.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Well, good morning. I'm so glad you're with us on this independence weekend.

Growing up, I always enjoyed the 4th of July weekend. And the older I get, even in the midst of our imperfect union, I am astounded at the documents that came out of those early days, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and this now 244-year-old run at filling in all the fullness of those founding ideals.

We are a privileged people. And we live in an exciting time as we continue to share that freedom that has been granted to us and given to us in that soil that was plowed often in just troubled circumstances.

But may we use our freedom well as citizens, particularly as we think about our citizenship in heaven and all that we can be doing for the kingdom of God in these days.

[2 : 41] So happy 4th of July weekend to all of you who are watching us online. We're glad that you're here, wherever you've traveled to be. Let me pray and launch into our text this morning.

Our Heavenly Father, we now echo the song we sang earlier in the service, Speak to Me. Speak to Me through your word. Speak to Me through your spirit.

We are longing. We are waiting. Oh, Lord, speak to us in Christ's name. Amen. Life's troubles have a way of robbing us of sleep, or perhaps I'm just old enough now to know that in greater frequency. The sorrows of one's soul can be lodged in your mind in ways that you feel stuck on a recycling of your circumstances.

The troubled heart could, in some sense, be likened to a full, over-weighted load of wet towels that are stuck in a never-ending spin cycle.

[4 : 02] And the anxieties of life sometimes are almost difficult for us to pull ourselves out of, to think of anything else. It happens to me.

I'm assuming this morning it happens to some of you. I can tell you from the text that it happened to the disciples too. You can see it right there.

This is now the second time that Jesus is circling back on the place, on the vinyl record, the song of the blues of the disciples' soul, and he's having to lift that needle and address their sorrows, their troubled heart.

You can see it right there in our verses, verse 6. But because I've said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

And he's circling back because, although he's been speaking, quite frankly, to them since chapter 14, 1, where he opened, let not your hearts be troubled, he's still there.

[5 : 15] He's still addressing the spin cycle of a soul that is incapable of pulling themselves up and out of the circumstances of their life.

And he's going to do it again next week in verse 22, again, talking about how he is aware of their sorrowful state. So when you really think of it then, you could say that on the night Jesus was betrayed, he spent most of his time trying to bring help to their troubled heart.

That's astounding. Ready to walk forward to the cross, bear the sins of the world, make himself a substitute for sin, and in light of all that that anxiety would produce, he's continuing to lay down language that will support his weary band long after his absence.

And indeed, it was his absence that triggered the sorrow of their heart. That's what troubled them, his going, and what good could come from his going, his absence, and what advantages might there possibly emerge from his absence.

You know that because even in our text, he says in verse 5, Now I am going to him who sent me. And that is what continues to run through their mind.

[6 : 55] Let me put it to you simply as we launch into the text. What good can come from his going? What advantage is there to his absence?

Evidently, there is some advantage. Look at verse 7. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage if 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. The advantages of Christ's absence, his presently being seated on the throne as being called us to worship through this morning, his present placement, not in our world, but before the Father in heaven, has advantages for the world because of the arrival of the Spirit.

And in fact, there are two things you really need to see about the arrival of the Spirit. Two goods coming to you today through this text as a result of his going.

The first one relates to everyone. Verses 8 to 11. There is an advantage for the entire world that Jesus is not walking on it today. And the second advantage, verses 12 to 15, is really specifically for the 11.

[8 : 18] I mean, Judas has already gone out. And so the Spirit's arrival has advantages for the entire world, but there's a particular advantage it has for the 11, his select witnesses.

So what are they? Look at 8 to 11. The first advantage to his absence, the good the world gets from his going, is simply this. Our spiritual ignorance is now at last overcome by the Holy Spirit's exposure.

Now, if you're sitting at home and you're trying to handle this message, that is one of the two anchors that this text is going to unfold for you, and you might just want to write it down.

Our spiritual ignorance is at last overcome by the Holy Spirit's exposure.

Look at verses 8 to 11. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me.

[9 : 24] 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. The key word in the text is convict.

You can see it there in verse 8. He will convict the entire world. Elsewhere, that word is really used in the sense of exposure. He's exposing something, but generally that which is exposed is negative in nature.

Therefore, it confronts. It challenges. It acts always in the scriptures, almost universally in connection to the idea of light and darkness.

So he's actually used this word convict, translated here, back in chapter 3 and in verse 20, where he said, For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be what?

Exposed. Convicted. So the advantage of Christ, now seated in heaven, for the entire world that moves on with his bodily absence, is that the spirit, with this almost ubiquitous capacity, is able to reach the sin in the world with all of its ubiquitous reality.

[10 : 52] And it can expose. It can convict. Let me put it to you the way I've been thinking about it this week in regard to how the text is used, or the word is used.

The Holy Spirit enables you, me, us, anyone, through all generations, to see things or to be brought into the light that things might be seen.

Think of it this way. The Holy Spirit enables the entire world to see the blemishes of our collective soul in ways that a well-lit mirror can expose to you in the light that which you didn't know, but had already and always been present.

I haven't done much traveling lately. And there are times, though, where I've been on the road, and I go to these hotel rooms. Haven't been in a hotel in a bit. But some of these hotel rooms attached to the wall in the bathroom area is a, I think it's like a mirror for your face, and it's almost on a swivel.

And it's circular. And the circular mirror is actually operated with a switch, and there is a blinding light.

[12 : 25] And the mirror itself is magnified in nature. Have you ever stood before one of those mirrors? It's a frightening thing.

Your face is suddenly, my face was immediately exposed. Blemishes had always been present. Had been hidden because of the darkness, the opaqueness of my experiential sight. And what the Holy Spirit does, what the Holy Spirit does for the entire world is he gives you the world as it really is.

He gives you yourself as you really are. And he does it in three ways. Notice the exposure in three ways. There's a convicting or an exposing of the entire world concerning three things.

Concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. Now, this is a good thing. This is a good thing because we're ignorant of these things.

[13 : 40] In fact, we naturally normally embrace the idea, don't we? That we don't really know much about spiritual truth. In fact, we champion the notion of our ignorance.

We don't know what is true. We're not aware of the condition of our own nature and our soul. We're never quite clear on what righteousness is, even though we reference it in every conversation.

And what would judgment truly look like if it were to come with the standard of God? We are communicating through our own words approximations of that which is truly sin, truly righteous, truly judgment.

And what the Holy Spirit does, and what's good news for you and for me, is that you can begin to understand what these things really are.

You can move this morning from spiritual ignorance about truth toward a grasping of the facial contour of your soul through the life and ministry and power and person of the Holy Spirit.

[15 : 01] So what do you need to know? What good news do I have for you today? First, the Holy Spirit's here to convict the world of sin.

Notice how sin is spoken of here. This rather obtuse language concerning sin because they do not believe in me. It's interesting that you and I need to know our spiritual ignorance, our sinful state at its core is a lack of faith or belief that Jesus is God's true son.

So what does sin look like in your life? It looks like all the areas where we disbelieve the word of Christ, that we are not prone to take the revelation that we've received and hold it to be self-evident. This is what he's speaking about. So you can learn something about yourself this morning. You're a sinner. We know that. We know that through the power of the Holy Spirit.

He can expose that to us. He can expose that to us. That is the universal condition of the entire world. But notice, not only sin, but concerning righteousness.

[16 : 30] And notice he connects righteousness because I go to the Father. What does this mean? What is righteousness and its relationship to Jesus' ascension before the Father? Well, think about how you normally talk to other people about the resurrection of Christ.

What do you say it proves? We often say the resurrection of Christ proves his deity. But fundamentally, there's something different here. The resurrection of Christ proves that in his humanity, he was absolutely righteous.

Because only the righteous see God. So there's a great claim about his righteous life and the resurrection and his ascension and his return to the Father is a full indication that there was one. There was one who walked this earth and could rightly, righteously walk on his own into the presence of God.

And therefore, have a way of pulling you by faith in his train. So the righteousness, what happens is when you start to think about righteousness today, and all of us think righteousness in terms of that

which is strictly horizontal, but the righteousness that God is revealing to us here through the Holy Spirit is that Jesus' ascension, his present absence, is an indicator that in his life he was absolutely morally perfect, righteous in every way, fully, fully, in heart, mind, and soul, was a lover of the word and a doer of it.

[18 : 17] And therefore, he's your hope. So while the Holy Spirit convicts you that you are sinful, the Holy Spirit convicts you that there is hope because he is righteous.

And look at the third one. Not only that, concerning judgment, verse 11, because the ruler of this world is judged. Now that surprises you, doesn't it? When you think of judgment, you think of yourself or other people.

Judgment. We want judgment to fall. Judgment to come. But here, the text is actually speaking about a judgment because of the cross that has already turned into effect something on the ruler of this world.

The ruler of this world, the prince of darkness, Grim, is the evil one, Satan himself. And what the Holy Spirit can assure you of this morning, regardless of your circumstances, not only that you're a sinner, not only that he's righteous and therefore you have hope, but he can actually assure you that Satan's power has already, already been judged in Christ's death.

That there is a full, complete end to his rule, although his tail still swings to and fro until consummation.

[19 : 43] Now, so when you wake up in the morning and you feel the sorrows of your soul make you begin to feel that this world is falling apart, that you don't know where to go for what, this Holy Spirit can settle the sorrowful soul with an understanding again that regardless of your experiences, the evil one has been judged.

So, is it cancer that seeks to destroy the body? Is it the evilness of the evil one? Certainly it is.

And that has already been judged in the cross and will be absolutely righted on the last day and we have great confidence. this idea, what good is there from his going?

Point one, our spiritual ignorance is overcome by his exposure.

I know who I am. I know who Jesus is. I know that the evil one won't win. And I'm able to give my life to Christ.

[21 : 00] And the entire world, notice that, he will convict the world of these things. the entire world benefits from the absence of Christ through the arrival of the Spirit.

Now here's the question. How? How does that come to everyone? Well for that, you gotta look at the second part.

And the second advantage to his going isn't spoken of in terms of what he does for everyone, but what he does for the eleven. Twelve through fifteen. 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. If I was to put the header, the second header in the message, it would simply be this, that for the eleven, their spiritual calling to bear witness to the truth was carried out through the Holy Spirit's guidance.

He will guide you into all truth. I mean, this is really something. The key word here, though, is you. Who is you?

[22 : 20] I actually think it's easy for us to put our self into that sense and to think that, well, this applies first and fundamentally to me. The Holy Spirit guides me into all truth.

But context controls the meaning of language. And this is the third time that this you plural is used specifically in reference to the eleven.

To them, not us. Just take a look. Look back at chapter fourteen and verse twenty-six. But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Well, that can't possibly be us. The things that he had said to them. So the Holy Spirit is doing a particular work with the apostolic band and he will bring to their remembrance what Jesus said. and that's also further in the text not only there, but look at chapter fifteen and verse twenty-six and twenty-seven. But when the helper comes whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me and you also will bear witness because you have been with me from the beginning.

[23 : 49] From the beginning. You and I weren't with him from the beginning. And so the you is related to the eleven. And the eleven will be enabled to fulfill their spiritual calling to bear witness to

truth as the Holy Spirit will guide them.

The Holy Spirit will bring unto their remembrance what Jesus said. Now this is really fascinating for us.

Think about it this way then. The gift that is given to them is one of guidance into truth. And through them the benefit will extend to the entire world.

Just as there were three things that were beneficial for everyone concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment, so here there is one word used three times that indicates how you get benefit of the Holy Spirit through the eleven.

Do you see the word? Do you have any guess on what it is? It's a three-fold use of this word announce or declare. Look at the way he speaks about what he's going to do for the eleven.

[25 : 08] Whatever he hears he will speak and he will declare to you the things to come. He will glorify me. He will take what is mine and declare it to you. That is the eleven. All that the Father has is mine.

Therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. Three times. Declare, declare, declare. How do you get hold of the fact that you're a sinner?

How do you get hold of the fact that Jesus is righteous and made a way for you? How do you get hold of the fact that the evil one is already defeated? Through the declaration of their witness.

Now this is wonderful to think about. as the first idea would be comfort to us in our circumstances, this second half should give insight into the calling that God has for us as Christ Church Chicago. What is our calling? Our calling is to give ourselves to the apostolic declaration through which the entire world can gain all the benefits of his present reign.

[26 : 14] I mean, this is amazing. When you think about that word declare, I looked this up this week, hang with me, give me two or three minutes on this. The declaration of the apostles came both through their preaching and through their pen.

What they said and what they wrote. 1 Peter 1.12 things that have now been announced to you through those who preach the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.

Peter is saying things have come to you, they have been announced to you, literally the same word we have here, declared to you by the preaching which comes by the Holy Spirit.

It's not just Peter and his preaching proclamation. It's Paul. It's that man born out of time. It's the 11 plus one man. It's the outsider who had a revelation of Christ and was also given.

Acts 20.20 he says, I did not shrink back from declaring to you all that was profitable. The same word here. His preaching ministry of Peter and Paul is the backbone on which the church is built.

[27 : 30] And our own writer, John, I mean those are the big three, Peter, Paul, and John. John will do the same thing in 1 John 1.5. This is the message that we proclaim to you, literally, that we declare to you.

And it's not only what their preaching ministry is, it's their writing ministry, 1 John 1.4. And we are writing these things to you. 2 Peter 3.15, Paul also wrote to you the wisdom given to him by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1.19-21, we have a foundation that is now more sure because these men gave us something to read by which they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 3.7, it is actually the Holy Spirit that is speaking to you in the word written down. So the declaration given to the eleven, known through their preaching and their penmanship, is the means by which the entire world is blessed in his absence.

So think about what that means for us. I mean, for me, if the first truth comforts you, the second truth calls you as a church to a recognition of what the church is to be.

[28 : 47] It's the assembly, the gathering of the people around the apostolic proclamation as it has been given to us in the declaration of the Spirit, these are our founding documents through which we're pulled from ignorance into a relationship with God.

Now, that's it. You want to make a difference in this world? I don't know one person in Christ Church Chicago that doesn't want to make a lasting difference in the world. This text will tell you how.

You want to make a difference in the world, give your life to God's Word. Give your life to an ever-present study, to an ever-better and better understanding because this is God's truth, the voice of the Spirit.

Think of the Ethiopian eunuch. You want someone to come to know Jesus? The Ethiopian eunuch. Do you know what you're reading? How can I unless someone explains it to me? This is why we

ought to give ourselves to Bible reading.

This is why even in the midst of a COVID-19 context, you could still be reading one-to-one with someone. All of us, when we ask God's Spirit to help us understand the Word and we try to understand the Apostolic Declaration, He promises to give us what we ask for.

[30 : 13] And we can grow in our knowledge and understanding of the Word. The Word of God is the central means by which the blessings of God come to a world left and lost in ignorance.

And so this is it. Our calling is clear. Is your heart troubled today? You're on the spin cycle of circumstances and you don't know how to get out?

Well, because He is absent, but the Spirit has arrived, you can come to know who you are, who Jesus is, and you can be optimistic about the future because judgment has already fallen on the prince of the darkness of this air.

Wondering whether or not you want to stay a part of Christ Church Chicago or move into Woodlawn or participate in a place that would be the proclamation of God's Word or wonder if you should have a conversation with someone on the scriptures or the gospel?

Wonder what we should be doing when we get together? Declare, declare, declare. He's declared it to them. Study their preaching, read their writing, live under their word, and as this happens, everyone benefits.

[31 : 37] Everyone benefits. Thank God the gifts that come to us are born on the backs of those who would suffer and die for him, the eleven and the apostolic band.

Let me pray. Our Heavenly Father, we often are just up in the night, unable to pull ourselves from the things that concern our mind.

Thank you that we're not alone, that before us there were the disciples who were languishing in a long night of their own in complete ignorance on how your departure would be for the welfare of their own soul.

people. And thank you that we've heard Christ's word to them, that there is an advantage. The advantage is what occurs through the arrival of the Spirit.

And it's a benefit to the entire world. Lord, may that comfort us today. And may it guide us into our calling in Christ's name.

[33 : 05] Amen. Amen.