

The Advantage

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[0:00] Amen. You may be seated. Kids, you're excused to your King's Kids classes.! And if you would open up your Bibles to John chapter 16, 1 through 15.

I'll be preaching 1 through 15 this morning. It's on page 1072 of your pew Bible. And as you're turning there, got a question. Have you ever imagined what it would be like if Jesus remained? Physically present with us today? That He didn't leave. That He stayed. That He was with us. We'd hear His voice.

We'd see His facial expressions. We'd belly laugh with Him at the dinner table. That's a glorious thought. We'd feel His hug, His embrace.

The people that we love who've got questions about Jesus, we'd just bring them to Jesus. Let Jesus speak for Himself. People who have cancer, people who have mental illness, we'd bring them to Jesus.

[1:09] Jesus would heal them. It seems like the best possible situation would have been if Jesus just stayed physically present with us.

That's what it'll be like in the new heavens and the new earth. When we will be with Him, we'll see Him face to face. So why would Jesus leave? Because in this passage that we're looking at today, Jesus is going to say repeatedly, I'm leaving, I'm going.

Why would He say that? And then why would He say, It is to your advantage that I go away. It's better for you that I go so that I can send to you the helper.

He's speaking of the Holy Spirit. The third person of the Trinity. It's better that I go so that I can send Him to you.

What advantage is the Holy Spirit to us today? Maybe even more finely tuned, What advantage is the Holy Spirit for?

[2:29] To what end? To what purpose? And maybe here's a question. How do you even know that the Holy Spirit is actively at work within a local church?

How do you know? Well, we've been looking at the farewell discourse for the last couple weeks. We're talking about an extended teaching Jesus gave within hours of His death.

And He has been preparing His disciples for His coming departure. Not just His death and resurrection, but His ascension. He's leaving the earth. And I just want you to see in 15, 26 and 27, The ending of the passage before what we're looking at today.

Jesus talks about the helper coming. And then this helper will bear witness about me. And then He turns to His disciples and He says to them, You also will bear witness to Jesus.

What we're looking at. The advantage of the Holy Spirit has everything to do with our bearing witness to Jesus. We know what it's like to experience shunning for Jesus.

[3:49] Did you know the Holy Spirit can give you joy in that? We know what it's like to have family members who are not Christians yet.

And we start to think like, Are they just beyond God's ability to save? We can become discouraged. We can become hopeless. And in this world, we can become disoriented.

And the Spirit advantageously not only gives us joy, but He gives us courage and He gives us the clarity of truth. And all of that together gives us boldness.

Do you know what happens when Christians who are seeking to bear the fruit of the Spirit and bear witness to Christ? Start feeling overly fearful from the world.

And we start feeling like, God's not going to save anybody in my family. Or we start thinking things like, Man, maybe the world's got a point.

[4:59] Maybe I should just check out and check into the world. Do you know what starts happening? We start drifting. Check out, blend in, ease up.

But Jesus warns about it in 16.1. He talks about it as falling away. About stumbling. So Jesus, into our witness and into the temptation to fall away, He speaks a word of advantage for us, brothers and sisters.

It's better that He goes away, that He can send the helper. So here, chapter 16, 1 through 15. I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away.

They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he's offering service to God. And they will do these things because they have not known the Father nor me.

But I have said these things to you that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told them to you. 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.

[6:08] And none of you asked 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's 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. 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. And all that the Father has is mine. Therefore, I said that He will take what is mine and declare it to you.

[7:13] This morning, I want to look at three challenges to our witness to Christ. Our testifying to who Jesus is and what He has done. And see how the Holy Spirit is the advantage in these challenges.

Our advantage. So, challenge number one. Being shunned. In verses 1-4, Jesus echoes what we were looking at last week.

And last week, at the end of John 15, I tried to convince you of something from the Scriptures. This is what Jesus was trying to sober us up towards.

That the result of abiding in Jesus and bearing fruit to the glory of God will very well get you hated by the world. And we're being told here we are to be witnesses to the very people that will hate us on account of Jesus' name.

In 16-2, we read, they will put you out of the synagogues. They is another way of talking about the world.

[8:30] Now, the planet Earth doesn't hate you. It's sinful humanity and organized rebellion against God that will hate you. And they might not hate you to your face.

They just might be polite about it. But the world, Jesus is telling his disciples, they're going to put you out of the synagogues.

It's social shunning. It's a kind of ostracizing and isolating and alienating, casting out of you do not belong here.

You don't fit. Back in John chapter 9, when the man who was born blind was healed, the Pharisees couldn't believe it. And so they call his parents in. And in 9-22, we are told the parents wouldn't, they wouldn't even come close to confessing Jesus as the Christ.

Because the Pharisees had threatened everyone that they'd be put out of the synagogues if they did. Now, today, we're not living in fear of being put out of our synagogues, are we?

[9:36] We fear a different kind of shunning, whether that's online, or whether that's in your family or in your workplace, your kids' athletics teams.

We fear getting pushed out. We fear of being the object of ridicule of other people. We fear being shunned.

And that's not all Jesus has to say here. He goes even further. He says, indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he's offering service to God. Did you know that 10 of the 11 disciples that Jesus is speaking to right here died martyrs' deaths, proclaiming Jesus is the Christ, died and was raised?

And the 11th, John, who's writing this, was apparently boiled in oil, but survived it. Why would the world want to kill the disciples?

And it's not just disciples way back in the first century. We have brothers and sisters all around the world who are being killed today for Christ.

[10 : 56] By people who think that they're offering worship to God. Jesus says that is happening because they have not known the Father nor me.

They don't have a relationship with the living God. They are in darkness. They are blinded. They're living in a delusion. Now, imagine if you are one of the disciples hearing this at this moment.

And I'm guessing, like if you're Matthew, you turn to Peter and you'd be like, did he just say, whoever kills you?

Kill? I can get shunned. But killed? In just minutes from Jesus speaking this, his disciples, Jesus' disciples will abandon him.

They will abandon Jesus out of fear for their own lives. Jesus knew what would happen. But he also says in 16.1, he says, I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away, to keep you from stumbling.

[12 : 15] And so here they, in just minutes, they will flee Jesus. But in a matter of days, there will be an incredible transformation that takes place.

These fearful disciples who are hiding from those who may kill them, they are radically changed. And soon after Pentecost, the falling of the Holy Spirit upon the local church, they are transformed from being cowardly to being courageous.

They go from being fearful to bold and faithful. And not just bold and faithful, joyful. I've referenced Acts 16 a few times, where Paul and Silas are in a Philippian jail cell, feet in stocks, and they're singing at midnight.

Joyful. That they get to suffer for the name of Jesus. What does that? Who does that?

[13 : 25] Who changes a person's heart from being fearful to joyful in the midst of being shunned?

It's the advantage. It's the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who does these things. So, when Jesus says in 15:11, I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full, that abiding in the vine results in fruitfulness and fullness of joy, that's taking place even when you're being shunned for the name of Jesus.

So, this first challenge that we're looking at here is the challenge of being shunned, being put out. But what the Holy Spirit, our advantage, does is He gives us joy in the moment.

The second challenge that we face, we see in verses 4 through 11, the second half of verse 4 through 11, and that happens when we're feeling powerless and a bit hopeless when it comes to other people in our lives that are not yet Christians.

We start thinking, there's just no way that they're going to become Christians. There's no way they're going to confess Jesus as their Lord. In verses 4 through 7, Jesus repeatedly tells His disciples, He is going away.

[15 : 05] Multiple times, I'm going, I'm leaving. Verse 6, He tells His disciples, I know that sorrow has filled your hearts. They're not happy that Jesus is leaving to go back to His Father.

They are sad. They are fearful of being shunned of these weighty words that Jesus has said.

Whoever kills you? These are weighty words.

Of course they're going to be sorrowful that their leader is leaving. You know what? These words that Jesus says to them and to us, whoever kills you, going to be put out of the synagogues, we typically want to kind of run from those kinds of words.

But they're really good words to linger on. Because they get at things like, am I willing? Am I willing to be shunned?

Am I willing to step into hardship on account of Jesus' name? You can fill your heart with sorrow and joy even when you're feeling powerless.

[16 : 28] And so when Jesus says that He's leaving, in verse 7, Jesus reveals that someone is coming in His stead. Look at verse 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 go, I will send Him to you. Who is this helper? Jesus has already referenced Him twice in the farewell discourse.

He's referenced Him in 14, 25, and 26, and 15, 26, and 27. The helper is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. Remember, I gave you a crash course in the Holy Spirit a couple weeks ago.

He is a person. He is God present with us. And He comes to dwell with us the moment we believe in Jesus. He is fully God. He is a person.

He is a who, not an it. He's present. He's powerful. He's a life giver. And not only a life giver, He brings peace, shalom. And what Jesus is saying, if I don't go, the Holy Spirit's not coming, so it's better that I go so that the Holy Spirit comes, He will help you.

[17:40] Help them with what? Well, in this context, it's witnessing, bearing witness to Jesus. And not just to the original disciples, to 21st century disciples, to you and me.

The Holy Spirit will help us in our witness. He advantages us in our witness. It's good and right for you to feel like this when it comes to a non-believing relative or friend.

There is nothing in and of yourself that you can do that this person will go from death to life. There's not enough force of your will to change someone's eternity.

You can't be smart enough and persuasive enough to convince somebody into the kingdom of God. We bump into our limits real quick.

But look what the Spirit is able to do in verse 8. And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

[19:01] You can't not do that. You don't have the power to do that. Only the Spirit of God has the power to do that. When we're talking about conviction, we're talking about having an area of sin or wrong exposed in you and not just exposed.

You personally become convinced that this area of wrong is wrong against God. That's the kind of conviction we're talking about. That not only is it exposed, but I'm convinced that this is grievous in God's sight.

That something needs to change. It's like this. When a prosecutor is seeking to convince a jury that this person who's been charged with a crime is actually guilty, they're going to expose it.

They're going to try to bring as much facts to bear in order to convince that jury that that person is guilty. What the Holy Spirit does is He convinces us of our own guilt.

That something must change. convince the world, convict the world, sinful humanity and organized rebellion against God.

[20:18] The Holy Spirit is able to change the hearts of those who make up the world. We were once in the world, but we're no longer of the world because we've been called out of the world in order to bear witness to the world.

the Spirit will come and convict the world of sin.

And then Jesus unpacks that in verse 9. There's a particular kind of sin He has in mind. He says, concerning sin because they do not believe in Me.

The Holy Spirit, when He comes, He will convict sinners dead in their sin who are part of the world, He will show them, expose them and convince them that they were wrong to not believe in Jesus. He will expose that in them. If you're a Christian in the room, He has done that in you. That instead of not believing in Jesus, you must believe in Jesus.

[21:27] because He's your only hope. He's God in the flesh who died on the cross for your sins. So He convicts the world of sin and in verse 8 we read that He convicts the world of righteousness and He spells that out in verse 10.

It could be a righteousness that is a false righteousness. Like what Isaiah talks about when he compares the righteous deeds of Israel to filthy rags.

That could be the case here. I tend to think what's being talked about here is more positively stated. A positive righteousness. Because in verse 10 we read this.

Concerning righteousness because I go to the Father and He will see me no longer. With Jesus' departure there is not this physical presence and demonstration of righteousness in front of them. And so what the Spirit does is not only does He expose and convince of guilt He exposes and demonstrates the goodness of righteousness.

[22:36] This is what you want. Not hate but love. Not to be served but to serve. In both of these cases whether it's conviction of sin or conviction of righteousness brothers and sisters our hope our confidence is not in ourselves when we witness it's in the Spirit of God.

And then we read in verse 8 He's coming to convict the world of judgment and He unpacks that in verse 11. He says the ruler of this world the devil has been judged.

If you remember Saddam Hussein Saddam Hussein was the dictator of Iraq in March 2003 his government was toppled in Baghdad and he went on the loose.

December 2003 he was captured November 2006 he was convicted and December of 2006 he was executed by hanging.

He was a bad dude. And what Saddam Hussein's being toppled captured convicted and then eventually executed it demonstrates is it took a while.

[24:04] It was a process. When Jesus Christ died on the cross and was raised from the dead at that moment Satan was cast down conquered dominion changed there's a new king with a new kingdom in town.

But just like Saddam Hussein who ran amok for a little bit the devil is running amok. He's been toppled but he has yet to be thrown into the lake of fire.

But his doom is sure. In a similar way what we're being told here is that the Holy Spirit will convict certain people in the world that this domain of darkness is doomed.

That the devil his days are numbered. That this is not what you want to be living for. It gets exposed and then they're convinced and then they're like I gotta change.

I gotta move from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of the beloved son and it's only through Jesus that you can get flipped. That you can get repood.

[25:14] That you can get delivered from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of the beloved son. And so in all of these ways the Holy Spirit is convicting the world of sin righteousness and judgment.

It's a huge a huge event when the Spirit brings us to bear in somebody's heart. How does the Spirit do this?

How does the Holy Spirit convict people of sin, righteousness and judgment? Well it's not apart from the Bible. People know what sin is because the Bible defines what sin is.

People know what righteousness is because the Bible spells out righteousness. The Bible people know about judgment because of what the Bible says about judgment.

So the Holy Spirit in tandem with God's word convicts the world of sin righteousness and judgment. Can any of you do that on your own?

[26:22] No. So the Spirit of God is our hope and in the face of hopelessness.

There might be many in the world but we've got one Holy Spirit and He is all we need. He is the one who is able powerful to change the human heart from being dead to giving it new life.

You know to that end I'm going to shamelessly say it's not too late to sign up for the evangelism class. Right out those doors it's going to be great.

That's challenge number two. When we feel powerless there is courage because of the Holy Spirit's power.

The third challenge comes from being in the world. we are often challenged by the world. We can get disoriented even distracted.

[27:32] We need clarity. Clarity of the truth. Clarity of purpose. You know there will be times when we let our guards down.

There will be times maybe even seasons when you become disoriented or distracted by the desires of the world. your heart suffers.

You become dull. And then because God is so patient and kind he kind of snaps you out of it. He brings you around. I said this earlier but if the world is sinful humanity and organized rebellion against God we once were in and of the world but we are of the world no longer.

we have been called out of the world. Jesus chose us out of the world. We are in the world but not of the world. We've been called out of the world in order to bear witness to the world.

To bear witness to the world of who Jesus is and what he's done. and when we are bearing fruit and bearing witness it becomes a compelling witness.

[28:56] The disciples were listening to Jesus say this. You can imagine what they're thinking. Wait, you're leaving? Who's going to lead us? Who's going to guide us? And in verse 12 Jesus tells his disciples he's got more to say to them but they're not able to hear.

Not right now. Tells them he's leaving. You've got more to tell us but you're taking off?

Verse 13 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 and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

Just like Jesus did not speak on his own authority but only spoke what he heard from his father. So the spirit doesn't speak on his authority but he speaks only what he has heard from the son and the

father.

And that spirit of God, the spirit of truth, he is going to be the proxy teacher guide of the disciples upon Jesus' departure.

[30 : 11] He is going to lead them. He is going to lead us. And in verse 13 he's going to declare the things that are to come.

I love the book of Revelation. I love it. It is so encouraging.

And it speaks of the things that are to come. Do you know it was the Holy Spirit who declared that, spoke that to the apostle John, the same guy that wrote the gospel of John, but he declared it down the line, the things that are to come.

Your book of Revelation is the fulfillment of what Jesus is saying here. The things that are to come. In verses 14 and 15, Jesus says two times, the Spirit will take what is his, what is mine, and declare it to you.

the Spirit will take the truth of who Jesus is, and what he's done, is what he's doing, what he will do, and he will declare it to you. And he's speaking to his original disciples.

[31 : 25] He's going to make it known to them. We learn from earlier in the farewell discourse that the Spirit will cause, bring to mind, bring to remembrance to the apostles what Jesus has said.

And here we're learning that the same Spirit of truth is going to declare to them the things that Jesus has yet to say, but wants to say, even things that are yet to happen.

What we're talking about here is the faith passed on to the apostles and to us. In Jude, it's a little book right before the book of Revelation.

In Jude 3 we read, Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

Once and for all, the faith, the body of doctrine and teaching about who Jesus is, about the church, about justification and union with Christ, the nature of the church, end times, this faith was passed down once and for all from the apostles to the church.

[32 : 51] And it's the Holy Spirit that impressed upon, declared to them the faith. truth. We have in the Bible what God wants us to have.

It's the Spirit declaring truth. Through this passage, there's such an emphasis on the Spirit declaring the words of Jesus to the apostles.

One of the things that I'm sure you've noticed among evangelicals is you tend to have kind of this split of churches. You've got the Bible churches, word churches, and then you have the Spirit churches, the passionate churches.

And so it's either word or Spirit, but that is not what we're reading here. What we're reading here is not either or, it's both and.

It's word and Spirit. it's what the good doctor, D. Martin Lloyd Jones, would call doctrine on fire. We want to be biblically robust and spiritually aflame.

[34 : 17] And there is a focus that this truth narrows in on one person. In John 16, 14, Jesus says, of the Holy Spirit, He will glorify me.

His declarative work is going to spotlight Jesus. So we've seen three challenges.

What is the advantage of the Holy Spirit to us? Joy, when shunned. It's courage, because of His power to change people, not our own.

And it's truth. Truth, the Spirit of truth. And you know what happens when you take all that together? when you have joy and you have courage and truth that the Holy Spirit is working at among us?

Do you know what that does? It makes you bold. It makes you willing to say things and do things that you may not otherwise.

[35 : 39] But wait, hold on, time out! How is that better than Jesus being with us? Couldn't Jesus just do that?

Why is it that it's to our advantage that the Holy Spirit comes? Because Jesus could have done that. He does that too! When the second person of the Trinity, the eternally existent second person of the Trinity, the Word when he took on flesh, when he became a man, he took on flesh fully and finally and forever.

He purposefully limited himself to a place. Do you know what the advantage is?

Jesus said, I gotta go, I'm limited to a place. But the one I'm sending is unlimited by space.

He's not bound by a body. He is able to radically change people from the inside out, all around the world at any time and in any place.

[37:13] Simultaneously. Do you know what the advantage is? The Holy Spirit?

This is a missional advantage. It's strategic. strategic. It's about bearing witness to the nations and not being limited to one place.

It's about empowering the church to bear witness to Christ all over the world. That's the end.

That's the purpose. The more and more people who are currently dead in their sin and blind to God will be given new life by the Holy Spirit. They'll be convicted of their sin, righteousness, and judgment and they will behold and they will believe and they will be given eternal life in Christ all around the world.

The Spirit's work is unlimited in its scope. He is at work all over the place and that's the advantage and his aim is always to glorify Christ through our witness.

[38:40] Do you remember that little phrase in 1614, he will glorify me? Jesus is speaking of the Holy Spirit, he will glorify me. This might be a little over simplistic because the Holy Spirit does a lot but I find those four words, he will glorify me to be one of the most clear and helpful statements on what the Holy Spirit is seeking to accomplish at this time, in this unique period between Jesus' first coming and his second coming.

He will glorify me and that should put strength in you. J.I.

Packer, you might be familiar with him, he's a prolific author, since died, he wrote a little book called Keeping in Step with the Spirit and he tells a story of him going to a Baptist church in Vancouver to preach on these four words, he will glorify me.

And he got there for a classic evening Sunday service at a Baptist church and it was dusk and he didn't have an opening illustration. So he's a little panicky and he's walking up this hill to this Baptist church and all of a sudden it's dusk and he's like, got my illustration because there on the side of the building of this church was an illuminated cross.

And he goes, there it is. There's the illustration I've been looking for because your gaze from that spotlight was not to the spotlight.

[40:19] The spotlight was drawing your gaze to the cross of Jesus Christ. He will glorify me. So whether it's in our bearing of fruit or bearing of witness, the Holy Spirit is eager to spotlight Jesus.

Which brings me to a question. How do you know when the Holy Spirit is actively at work in a local church? What? Is Jesus being spotlighted?

Is Jesus being exalted and magnified? Are people bearing the fruit of the Spirit, which is very Christ-like? Are they boldly proclaiming who Jesus is and what he's done?

That's how you know. How do we respond? We respond in humility. we respond in prayer.

And I'm going to pray a prayer, and would you pray with me in response to what Jesus has shown us this morning? Spirit of the living God, would you fall afresh upon us?

[41:42] Would you fill us, give us joy even under worldly pressure? Would you give us power even when the odds are stacked against us?

And would you give us clarity of truth, the truth about Jesus that will give us not just deepening conviction, but deepening boldness?

Spirit of the living God, would you bear fruit in us and bear witness through us in order that Jesus would be spotlighted in this little slice of the world that we're living in?

Lord, would you be pleased to gather for yourself men and women from all different walks of life in our city through the powerful witness of the spirit in us?

In your name we pray, amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.