

# How will we ever reach a world that hates Jesus?

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[ 0 : 00 ] So the reading is John chapter 16, reading from verse 4, the second part of verse 4. Page 1088.

And this is Jesus 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 asks 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.

[ 1 : 04 ] 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. All that the Father has is mine. Therefore, I said that he would take what is mine and declare it to you.

Well, good morning. My name is Andy. I'm one of the assistant pastors here at Grace Church. And it's great to be with you this morning. The outline for the sermon should be on the back of the server sheet, if you have one.

[ 2 : 09 ] But let's pray as we start. Heavenly Father, we meet the Lord Jesus in his word.

And so we pray we do that now. Please show us great truths about him. Amen. Now, if you are asked what it's like to be a Christian, many would say actually it's quite lonely.

At work, at school, at university, at the school gate, with friends. Surrounded by people who don't trust the Lord Jesus.

Stats say that 19 out of 20 people won't go to church today. Pretty much everyone we passed on their way here was on their way to do something else.

Most people in Dulwich have no time for church or the Lord Jesus. It feels quite lonely. Well, we are carrying on our series in the Upper Room Discourse of John 13 to 17.

[ 3 : 19 ] Jesus is speaking to the apostles the night before his crucifixion. Preparing them for his departure. The mood is one of fear and loneliness.

And to top it all off, they had just heard these words from the Lord Jesus in chapter 15, verse 18, that we looked at last week. If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

As we said last week, the world is John's shorthand for humanity in rebellion against God. And when Jesus is gone, these 11 apostles are going to bear the brunt of the world's anger against Jesus.

Which we saw carries on for Christians today. And so that begs the question, in the feelings of fear and loneliness, how will we ever reach a world that hates Jesus?

In the face of opposition, it's hard, isn't it, sometimes even to think, to speak to our colleagues, our friends, our neighbours and family about Jesus. In a way that is compelling.

[ 4 : 35 ] A way they would understand. Perhaps we find it even hard to think of others coming to the point of wanting to follow Jesus themselves. How are we going to bear witness in a world that hates Jesus?

Well, Jesus gives us the headline answer in verse 7, if you look down. 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. The helper there is the Holy Spirit that Jesus has spoken about already in chapter 14 and 15.

And as Jesus explains the work of the Holy Spirit to us, we are meant to be greatly encouraged. If we're following Jesus, we're meant to be encouraged that we can keep going, bearing witness in a world that hates Jesus.

Well, if we're here looking in on the Christian faith and we're so glad you're here. Well, then these verses describe how Christianity went from 11 scared guys in a room to us here this morning.

[ 5 : 45 ] And over 2 billion people worldwide. And what that actually means for each of us personally this morning. And so what has the Holy Spirit got in store for the world?

Well, our first point this morning. The Holy Spirit will convict the world. The Holy Spirit will convict the world. Verse 8.

And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. This language of convicting is one used in the law court, exposing someone's guilt.

Maybe think of a detective series like Poirot or Death in Paradise. At the end, they gather all the suspects together and they expose who the murderer was and how it was done and why.

Well, in the same way, the Holy Spirit, his work is to convict the world, exposing guilt. And he does that in three ways. Firstly, verse 9.

[ 6 : 51 ] Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me. The biggest problem we have as human beings is not the stabbing of teenagers, sexual violence or political tyranny, as awful as those things are.

But then when God sent his one and only son into the world, people didn't believe in him. And that attitude continues today.

This world refuses to recognise that Jesus is who he says he is and so reject his right rule and authority. And the Holy Spirit is at work convicting people that rejecting Jesus is an awful thing to do.

Someone on dry land may believe in a lifeboat, but they don't entrust themselves to a lifeboat until they find themselves drowning at sea in need of a rescue.

And in a similar way, we need to be convicted of sin, of our guilt before God and our desperate need of a rescue before we will trust in the Lord Jesus to be saved.

[ 8 : 03 ] And that is the Spirit's work. Often we think it's impossible to convince people to follow Jesus. And so we can be tempted to water down this talk of sin because it is hard to hear for people.

But actually, Jesus would say to us today, don't lose heart. Keep going. It's the Holy Spirit who convicts of sin. So the Holy Spirit convicts us concerning sin.

And secondly, he convicts the world, verse 10, concerning righteousness. Because I go to the Father and you will see me no longer. Through his words and his actions, Jesus showed the world God's standard of righteousness.

As he lived the perfect, sinless life. And so in the same way, exposing people's lack of righteousness. Their self-righteousness, indeed.

I sometimes take my three-year-old son to tennis lessons. And the competitive dad in me just rises up. And I cannot sometimes resist picking up a tennis racket at the end and smashing down a serve, showing him how it's done.

[ 9 : 23 ] There you go. But then imagine I go to Wimbledon. And then I say, hey Rafa, let me show you how it's done. Well, that is completely ridiculous.

His standard is so way beyond mine. Now, self-righteousness is about looking and saying, let me show you how it's done to other people.

Let me show you how to live. Look at me. But when we encounter a righteousness that is way beyond ours, we don't try and insist we are righteous, that we match up.

We're silenced. When the Lord Jesus came into this world, people saw his righteousness up close and they were silenced. People saw they weren't good enough for God.

And without Jesus physically present to look to, Jesus says the Holy Spirit will take over, convicting us that we do not match up to God's standards.

[10:27] Thirdly, Jesus says the Holy Spirit will convict the world concerning judgment. Verse 11, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Now, the ruler of this world is an ironic title for Satan. He's not really the ruler. He is leading a rebellion of this world against its creator. But the rebellion will not succeed.

Jesus had earlier said in chapter 12, 31, now is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out. The world thinks of the cross as the place where Jesus was condemned.

But Jesus insists it's the other way around. The cross is where the world is condemned and Satan is defeated, giving a foretaste of the final judgment to come.

That is bad news for Satan. But it's also bad news for all those who have sided with him. Because if the rebellion has failed and the leader of the rebellion has been put down, well then all those who are fighting in that rebel cause will also lose.

[11:42] Jesus' work on earth was to convict people that those who oppose him will end up on the losing side. And now Jesus says the Holy Spirit will take over at doing the same.

And so Jesus' work on earth was one of convicting people of rejecting him of their failure to be righteous and the judgment to come.

And the Holy Spirit continues this work in the world today. Notice then, just in passing, that we can't separate the work of the Holy Spirit from the work of Jesus.

They're not two warring partners in the Christianity boardroom trying to take the company in different directions. The Spirit continues Jesus' work today in the world by pointing us to Jesus as we have been thinking about already in our service.

Just as a floodlight doesn't seek to draw attention to itself, but if done well, lights up a building. So the Holy Spirit doesn't seek to draw attention to himself, but to light up Jesus, to point us to him, to see his glory, as Jesus says later on.

[12:57] But so often, the reason I struggle to visualize my friends coming to faith in Jesus is because I think they just don't need anything. How can I convince them of their need for Jesus?

Well, that is the work of the Holy Spirit. And he can do so whether they appear to need him or not. And so we, as Christians, we don't have to be ambulance chases, if I can put it like that, waiting for people to hit a crisis and then come swinging in with the gospel as the answer.

Because the Holy Spirit convict anybody, whether they appear strong or weak at the moment, even when our culture is against us, even when our arguments seem very feeble and weak.

The Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. But how does that happen? Well, Jesus goes on to explain in verses 12 to 15.

The Holy Spirit will work in the world by first working in the apostles. So the Spirit will convict the world through the apostles' words, verses 12 to 15.

[14:16] The apostles have a big job to do, don't they? They are to bear witness to Jesus in a world that hates him. They're going to preach. They're going to teach, persuade, defend and indeed write.

But they've got a good start. They've had their own eyes and ears, their memories. But they'll need help beyond that. Because it's got to be absolutely true.

And that's where Jesus says the Holy Spirit comes in. Have a look at verse 12. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

When a 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. All that the Father has is mine.

[15:13] Therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. Jesus says the Holy Spirit will bring glory to him as he transfers the truth from Jesus to the apostles.

Now this promise is really the basis of the New Testament that we have in front of us in our hands. That the Holy Spirit will guide them into truth as they wrote it all down.

Making sure they know all that needs to be known about Jesus. Also Jesus can be brought to a bigger audience. I don't really understand the world of PR and publishing.

In my minimal understanding, PR is about a company or brand working out communication strategies to promote their brand to a target audience.

Trying not to make a hash of it like the royals in the Caribbean. But the PR is about getting the biggest audience for their brand.

[16:15] Well that is kind of like what the Holy Spirit does for Jesus. He extends Jesus' words and works to people who live across the world throughout history.

All through the apostles' words. The words we have in front of us in the Bible. Just notice then as another aside.

Verse 13 is often misused and directly applied to us in the here and now. It's particularly used when people want to change what is taught in the Bible. They say something like the Spirit is leading us into new truth.

Or we need a fresh word from the Spirit. But when we look at these words carefully. Well yes the Spirit does guide us into truth.

But he does so through the words he is going to give the apostles. And so then we can't separate the Spirit's work from the word we have in front of us.

[17:17] Or indeed bypass it. When it comes to being led by the Spirit into God's truth. Because as we've sung earlier. As we open up the Bible. We meet Jesus in his word.

By his Spirit. I put the publication process if you like on the handout and it's on the screen. It starts with God the Father. At verse 15.

All that the Father has is mine. The Father shares all truth with Jesus the Son. And then the Holy Spirit receives all that belongs to Jesus. Have a look at verse 14.

He will take what is mine and declare it to you. So the truth goes from the Father to the Son to the Spirit to the eleven apostles. They then take what the Holy Spirit told them and declare it to the world.

And people are then convicted of their sin and turn to Jesus to be saved. Actually we see this happening in Acts chapter 2.

[18:20] The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost so powerfully to the apostles. He empowered Peter to speak about Jesus. Not the Spirit. And at the end of his sermon he said the words on the handout and on the screen.

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ. This Jesus whom you crucified. Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles.

Brothers what shall we do? This is by and large the same crowd who had called for Jesus to be crucified just a month earlier. Now they are convicted of their sin.

Why? Well not because Peter is a better preacher than Jesus. But because the Spirit is at work. They come to a point where they say what shall we do?

And Peter says to them repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

[19:26] So those who received his word were baptised and there were added that day around 3,000 souls. The church goes from 12 to 3,012. That's not bad for an impromptu guest event is it?

And then the gospel gets passed on and on. The same words to other people. They get convicted of sin. They repent. They receive the Spirit. They pass on the word to other people.

And on it goes. This is how the Spirit extends Jesus' ministry to the world. These words we have in the Bible. These Holy Spirit declared words.

When shared with the world. Bring people from death to life. We are actually testimony to that in this room this morning. If we went around the room and asked each other how we became a Christian.

Well we would hear different stories. But in every case. God spoke about his son Jesus. In words declared by the Holy Spirit. That were shared with us.

[20:27] By our parents. By a friend at university perhaps. A colleague. We heard these words. Convicted of our sin. That we had fallen way short of God's righteous standards.

And so deserve judgment. And which led us to put our trust in Jesus. We are examples here today. Of the Spirit's work in the world.

Through the pages of the Bible. Well the big application to the apostles in the room. And to us today. Is to be enormously encouraged.

Against a backdrop of fear. And loneliness. And bearing witness. In a world that hates Christians. The encouragement is that.

We're not on our own. The Spirit will be actively at work. Convicting people. Through the apostles words. This is how Jesus can say.

[ 21 : 29 ] It's for our advantage. That he goes away. He ushers in a new age of the Spirit. That cuts across geography. And history. We may sometimes think.

If only I lived when Jesus was on earth. I could bring my colleague. To a lunchtime talk. With Jesus himself as a speaker. Or as a church.

We could book Jesus. For next year's guest events. Wouldn't that be great? Yet every time the Bible is opened at church. Or at a guest event.

Or with a colleague one-to-one. Or a friend. Jesus is at work. By his Spirit. Through his words. To convict people of their need for him. And to bring new life.

In him. And if you're here. Looking in. To the Christian faith. Perhaps even as you hear these words this morning. You realise that it's awful.

[ 22 : 27 ] Not to believe in Jesus. That actually. I'm not righteous. I don't match up. To God's standards. And there is a judgement to come. And I need to avoid that.

I need the rescue. Well the rescue is yours. If you respond the same way. As the crowd did to Peter. To repent. To turn back to God.

And receive the forgiveness of sins. And for us as Christians. When I feel weak. And powerless. To persuade others. Of the truth.

Of the Christian faith. I don't need to dig deep. Within myself. For greater persuasiveness. I share the words of the Bible. And look to the Holy Spirit.

And pray. Because he is the one. Who will convict people of sin. Righteousness. And judgement. And bring them to saving faith. William McCullough.

[ 23 : 22 ] Was a minister. In Canberra Slang. In Scotland. In the 18th century. He was known actually. As the ale minister. Because when he got up. To preach. Some in the congregation. Got up to go to the pub.

And yet in his weakness. He proclaimed Jesus. From the scriptures. And the Holy Spirit. Was at work. God used his sermons.

In that part of Scotland. In 1742. Bringing hundreds of people. To put their trust. In the Lord Jesus. How then will we ever reach a world.

That hates Jesus. Well through the powerful work. Of the Holy Spirit. Working through his word.

The great encouragement. Here this morning. That even. The hardened cynic.

The most. Disinterested friend. The apathetic teenager. The colleague. Who seems to lack nothing. Can come. And be convicted. Of their need for Jesus.

[ 24 : 17 ] The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. Will be with his people. To continue Jesus' work. In the world. Just as I close.

The pastor. Theologian. Don Carson. Writes. This. On these verses. I would quit. All forms of Christian ministry. Immediately. If I were not convinced.

That the Holy Spirit. Is working in the world. To convict it. Of its sin. Righteousness. And judgment. I have no confidence. That on my own. I could successfully. Persuade anyone. Of their deepest need.

For Jesus. And of the truth. Of the gospel. And so. This passage. Reassures us. That. Far from being abandoned. To the task of witness. We are privileged.

To be the chosen instruments. By which. The Holy Spirit. Performs his ministry. Even when everything. Looks weak. Even when the culture.

[ 25 : 12 ] Seems against us. The Holy Spirit. Can turn anyone. To Jesus. Through his words. And so. If we want to see. God's spirit.

At work. Today. Then we'll want to be involved. In that work. Of sharing. A word about Jesus. With others. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father. We thank you. For the gift. Of the Holy Spirit. That he is at work. Today. In the world. That he brings. People. To knowledge. Of sin.

Righteousness. And judgment. Confronts them. And convicts them. That they may turn. To the Lord Jesus. We pray. That you would. Powerfully.

Work. In Dulwich. And the rest. Of the world. And please. Help us. Father. To be encouraged. That that is the case.

[ 26 : 11 ] That you are. At work. Today. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.