

The Spirit's Work

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Preacher: Phil Meulman

[0 : 00] This is the morning service at Holy Trinity on the 9th of April 2000. The preacher is Phil Muleman.

His sermon is entitled The Spirit's Work and is from John chapter 16 verses 1 to 15. The Trinity sinners are returning.

You may like to open the Pew Bibles to page 878. As we look at John chapter 16 and the verses that Beverly read to us this morning. Verses 5 through the end of 15. Well let me pray.

Our Heavenly Father I pray that your spirit would speak to us. That it would open our hearts and our minds to help us understand your word. To live it out and apply it in our lives today.

Amen. Over the past few weeks we've been looking at the farewell speech that Jesus has been making to his disciples. As recorded in John's Gospel.

[1 : 14] Last week we saw Jesus telling the disciples that they would find certain persecution from the world. And this persecution would be brought about on account of the name of Jesus.

Jesus said these things. And he said these things. Jesus said these things to forewarn the disciples of the coming danger. So that when this persecution does come.

They will not stumble. Now as Jesus continues to talk about his departure in chapter 16. He sees his disciples reaction to these words.

And he says in verse 6 I think it is. That much sorrow has filled your hearts. Well I want to ask the question of why they have this sorrow. It seems to me there are two reasons.

The first reason is because. It's an obvious one. Because he has been explaining and outlining up to this point. The dangers of the coming persecution. That these disciples will have to endure.

[2 : 15] Let me read to you verse 2 of chapter 16. Which sums it up in a sense. Jesus says to them. They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed an hour is coming.

When those who kill you will think that by doing so. They are offering worship to God. Now the things that Jesus says to his disciples here.

About this coming persecution. Doesn't sound very pleasant does it? And none of us like persecution. None of us like suffering and hardship.

Hardship. Especially if we are told that what lies ahead. Is hardship. On account of someone else. Now Jesus has said that they are going to suffer persecution.

On the account of my name. In the name of Jesus. That's why they are going to suffer it. So that's one of the reasons they are sorry. Their hearts are full of sorrow. No. But more than that.

[3 : 14] And this is the second reason. It seems that they will have to endure this persecution and suffering. On their own. Without Jesus their leader.

And he says in verses 4 and 5 of chapter 16. I didn't say these things to you from the beginning. Because I was with you. I've been with you all this time.

But now I am going to him who sent me. Yet none of you asks me. Where are you going? From the beginning.

Jesus had chosen and called certain disciples to follow him. To be with him. To be sent out by him. And Jesus had spent an inordinate amount of time.

Training and equipping these people for the work that they were to do. He had spent the last three years of his life. Training and equipping these people. Yet the net effect of Jesus' prediction of persecution and suffering.

[4 : 20] Is displayed here in the sorrow of the disciples. The reason there is sorrow. Is because there is no worthwhile benefit for them that they can see.

Furthermore. They do not see Jesus' departure. That he now talks about. Being of any benefit for them either. They do not see it resulting in any victory for them.

Or for anyone else. At this time. Jesus has also said. That no one asks where he is going. Now if you go back a couple of chapters. You might be on the ball. In chapter 13. Peter says. But Lord where are you going? And Thomas kind of implies it in chapter 14. They have asked this question of Jesus earlier.

Of where are you going? But then they didn't really fill out that answer. And now. Here they don't ask this question.

[5 : 21] Probably due to their personal. Their own personal anxiety. About Jesus being taken from them. Jesus saying that he is going away. And these people.

Are being left to suffer. On their own. So their heart. Is full of sorrow. Well what is going on here? I think what is happening.

Is that these disciples. Are focusing. Focusing. On themselves. And considering what Jesus going away. Which he talks about here. Will mean only for them.

As individuals. They are so self-absorbed. That they are not really asking. Sympathetic questions. About what Jesus is doing. Where he is going.

And why. But perhaps. These disciples. Need to stop focusing on themselves. For a moment. And consider. What Jesus going away.

[6 : 19] Will mean for him. They need to keep Jesus. Central. In their lives. At this point in time. I don't think he is central. Their focus.

Is on themselves. And when they do focus on Jesus. They will find encouragement. Because. His going away. Will permit.

The coming of the Holy Spirit. Which I will talk about. In a few moments. In a few moments. Isn't this self-absorption. Of the disciples. A common problem.

With Christians today. We become so self-absorbed. That we displace the centrality. Of Jesus. In our worship. In our empathy. And our commitment.

Thus. Losing the focus. Of what Jesus has commanded us to do. We tend to wallow. When we. Don't keep Jesus.

[7 : 14] Central. Friends. We need to. As Christians. Keep Jesus. Central. In our lives. Now because these disciples.

Have been so self-absorbed. They still haven't come to grips. With the fact. That Jesus departure. Is for their own good. So in verse 7.

He reminds them. Nevertheless. I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage. That I go away. For if I do not go away. The advocate. That is the Holy Spirit.

Will not come to you. But if I go. I will send him to you. Now the advocate. As I've just said. Is God's Holy Spirit. Now in church language.

God's Spirit. Is the third person. Of the Trinity. God the Father. God the Son. And God the Holy Spirit. The meaning of advocate.

[8 : 09] To describe God's Spirit. Here translated from the Greek. Literally means. One called alongside. To help. And was used also. Of a legal advocate. And the title advocate.

Also contains. The idea of strong. And encouragement. As well as counsel. And the fact. That Jesus promises.

An advocate. Suggests that this advocate. That is the Holy Spirit. Would do what he himself. Had done. During his own ministry. But the important thing.

To note here. When Jesus talks about. This advocate coming. Is that the Spirit. Or this advocate. Could not come. Could not be given. Until Jesus himself.

Was glorified. And in the context. Of John's Gospel. What does. Jesus glory means. It means. Going to the cross. Only. After Jesus.

[9 : 08] Had died on the cross. For the payment. Of our sin. After he had risen. From the grave. To demonstrate his victory. Over death. And ascended into heaven. Could the Holy Spirit.

Be poured out. And in the. In the New Testament. The Holy Spirit. Is the down payment. For us. Of eternal life.

It is. The foretaste of heaven. It is the presence. Of God. It is. The Holy Spirit. He is the one. Who renews us. And transforms us.

Into his likeness. But none of these blessings. Could be possible. Until the basis. For them. Was established.

And that basis. Is the triumph. Of Christ. That is his return. To God the Father. Via the cross. And the grave.

[10:01] Which Jesus will. Face. In the coming days. Now the proof. Of the Holy Spirit's work. Is easily seen.

As we contrast. This pretty black moment. In the disciples. Life. And the hours. Surrounding it. Where they are so self-absorbed. To their conduct. Several weeks later.

After Jesus has risen from the dead. Now in just a few hours. From now. These disciples. That are with Jesus. Who have been with him. All these years. These past few years.

Will desert Jesus. And flee. And furthermore. They will deny. Having any knowledge. Of him. Yet a few weeks later.

Once the Holy Spirit. Has been poured out. Upon them. These disciples. Faced hostility. With courage. And faith. And it prompts.

[10:57] Luke. Luke to write. In the book of Acts. They were all filled. With the Holy Spirit. And spoke the word. Of God. With boldness. Even.

When these disciples. Were flogged. They are testified. With joy. As chapter 5. Of Acts. Tells us. And Jesus. Here.

In chapter 16. Does not exaggerate. Then. When he says. That it is. To your advantage. That I go away. Because the Holy Spirit.

The advocate. Will come. Come. Well. What will this advocate. Or the Holy Spirit. Do. When he does come. Verses 8 to 11.

Give us the answer. And when he comes. He will prove the world wrong. About sin. Now if you look at the bottom. Of your Bibles there. There's a footnote.

[11:51] Under H. Which says this. Convict the world. So you could put it. In this term. And when he comes. He will convict the world.

Of sin. And righteousness. And judgment. About sin. Because they do not believe in me. About righteousness.

Because I am going to the Father. And you will see me no longer. About judgment. Because the ruler of this world. Has been condemned.

End. Now yesterday. At our dinner table. We were. Talking about. The things that. We had eaten during the day.

It's a common subject. In our house. And I said. That I. At lunch time. I didn't eat much during the day. I said that I had eaten. Two cheese and bacon rolls. And two doughnuts.

[12:51] Just as you giggled. They all giggled. And we had a good old laugh. About the things we ate. And then my wife. Reminded me.

Of the fact that I had actually eaten. Three doughnuts. Wives are good for that. I was convicted of my deceit.

And someone helpfully reminded me. This morning. Of my gluttony. I really thought that I had eaten two. Until Bab. Reminded me that I had actually eaten three.

Well there are three things here. That the spirit will convict the world of. And the world of course here. Is referring to humanity. The first thing the spirit will prove. Or convict the world of.

Is sin. And the world has no true understanding. Of the nature of sin. But when the spirit or the advocate comes. It will show people.

[13:49] That they are sinners. Because of their unbelief. In Jesus. Because of the people of the world. Do not believe in Jesus. They don't accept his teachings from the Bible.

Or believe his claims. Not looking to him for salvation. Or even discerning a need. Of him demonstrates this I think. And now we think that we can get away.

And get by. And do things on our own. And work out our own salvation. But the role of the Holy Spirit here. Or the advocate. Is to convict people of their sin.

And rebellion. And to turn them. To point them. To Jesus. But without the Holy Spirit. There is no way. That any person.

Could break free. From the claims of the world. From the chains of the world. And to turn to Jesus. So the first thing the Holy Spirit will do. Is convict us of sin.

[14:44] Convict the world of its sin. The second thing the Holy Spirit will do. Is convict the world. Of its righteousness. Because as verse 10 says. Because I am going to the Father.

Now this is a very hard verse. These few verses I think. Are very hard to understand. But I think this verse is saying. Is that the death. And the resurrection of Jesus.

Will prove his righteousness. Over and above. The world's righteousness. Let me try to illustrate this to you. From John's gospel.

The Jewish authorities. Claimed that. Getting rid of Jesus. Executing him. Or killing him. Would be a righteous act. Back in chapter 11.

The high priests there said. In verse 50. It is better for you. To have one man die for the people. Than to have the whole nation. Destroyed. Now these religious authorities.

[15:45] Were worried. And they wanted Jesus dead. Because more and more people. Were believing in him. And not in the temple worship. Of the day. So the risk to the nation.

To the people. To the people. And to the temple. Was too much. For these people to bear. So they plot. To kill Jesus. Because they considered.

It was better. For this one man to die. Since. If getting rid of him. It would. Preserve the nation. And along with it. The temple worship. And the law. They considered it therefore.

A righteous act. Even. Offering worship to God. As chapter 16. Verse 2 says. Now God the father. Knew what was going on. He knew what they were thinking. In their minds. But all the while. These people's hearts. Spoke another language. They thought.

[16:44] That they were being righteous. Certainly in the world's eyes. As they thought that. Well the Holy Spirit. Will convict. That sort of. Righteousness.

Just as he did. On the day of Pentecost. If you go. Forward. Into the book of Acts. After Jesus has risen. From the dead. And the Holy Spirit. Has been poured out. On the day of Pentecost.

We see there in Acts 2. A sermon. Given by the Apostle Peter. The very one. Who denied. Ever knowing Jesus. Peter gives a sermon. To those gathered. And we see here.

That he was given. Boldness to speak. By the Holy Spirit. And say. In summary. These words. He says. To these people. That are gathered. You crucified.

And killed. Referring to Jesus. You crucified. And killed Jesus. But God. Raised him up. From death. And God. Has made him.

[17:38] Both Lord. And Messiah. This Jesus. Whom you crucified. Now. Now. When this.

Apostle Peter. Spoke so boldly. We discover. That his audience. Whom he addresses. Were cut. To the heart. As verse 37.

Of Acts 2. Tells us. And so. Their claim. To righteousness. Is torn apart. As the Holy Spirit. Convicts. The people. And the religious authorities.

Of their sin. And rebellion. Against God. In their refusal. To acknowledge Jesus. As the righteous one. Their claim. To righteousness. Has been torn apart.

By the Holy Spirit. Now. The Holy Spirit. Continues. This work today. And. In our world. It is badly needed.

[18:34] People of our day. Don't think. Don't ordinarily. Think of themselves. As sinners. They think of themselves. As essentially. Righteous. If Jesus.

Came to take away. The sinner of the world. They might say. We often think. We often think. It must be. Somebody else's sin. That they've come to take away. Because. I am a good. And I'm an upright citizen.

I'm helpful. In the community. I pay my taxes. I don't speed. And if I have. Got a fine. I pay it on time. And so on. But friends. That's not enough. The Bible.

The Bible tells us. That we must be born again. No matter what credentials. We may have. And until. A person satisfied.

With their own righteousness. Perceives its inadequacy. Its self-centeredness. Its shortcomings. Its imperfections. In other words. Until that person. Is convicted. Of their righteousness.

[19:29] In the same way. That they are convicted. Of their sin. It is difficult. To understand. How the gospel. Gospel. Will be received. As good news. So it is the Holy Spirit.

Who convicts us. Of our sin. And convicts us. Also. Of our righteousness. Or if you like. Our false sense. Of righteousness. And the third thing.

The advocate. Or the Holy Spirit. Will do. Is convict the world. About judgment. As verse 11 says. Because the ruler. Of the world. Has been condemned.

Just as the world's. Righteousness is wrong. The world's judgment. Is also wrong. The reason being. That the world's judgment. Is based on the principles.

Of the ruler. Of this world. The ruler of course. Is referring. To Satan. The advocate. Or the Holy Spirit. Will convict.

[20 : 29] And make it clear. That there is such a thing. As judgment. And when Jesus. Was sentenced. To death. By the judgment. Of the people.

And of Pilate. It looked like. The cross. Would be the end. Of the story. Didn't it? And if that was going to be. The end of Jesus life. Then it would also imply. That it was going to be.

The end of the disciples life. As well. Or the disciples work. That they were doing. But the cross. Wasn't the end. Was it? The cross. Proved to be.

The place. Where judgment. Was cast. Onto Satan. And with him. All who are his children. And his servants. Because on the cross.

Jesus defeated death. And he. He prayed. He paid. The price. For all sin. He showed that. He showed that.

[21 : 23] That was to be true. When he rose from the dead. Three days later. The world. Falsely. Judged. Jesus. And condemned him. Now that he is risen.

And ascended to the father. The spirit. Or the advocate. The advocate. Will convict the world. Of this false judgment. With a righteous judgment. Now these three ideas.

Of sin. Righteousness. And judgment. Belong. I think. To the common stock. Of human ideas. Which are tossed about. In. In our pluralistic world today. In our world.

Of relativism. Where absolutely anything goes. Ethical absolutes. Are thrown out. They're thrown out the door. People claim the right. To decide for themselves.

What will count as sin. People claim the right. To decide for themselves. What will be their standard. Of righteousness. And where judgment. Has or has not been. Properly expressed.

[22 : 23] Jesus though. Through the Holy Spirit's witness. Challenges. This kind of ethical. Autonomy.

He uncovers. The rebellion. Against God. Which underlies it. And confronts the world. With the true character. Of sin. He confronts the world. With the true meaning.

Of righteousness. And the true place. Of judgment. It is therefore then. Through God's spirit. That the human heart. The human heart.

Is brought to a repentance. And then offered the salvation. Through Jesus. That is life indeed. Well Jesus time.

Is running short. His hour. Is at hand. The time. When he's about to. Go to the cross. Is. Before him. But he recognizes.

[23 : 23] That what he has said. So far. About the work. Of the Holy Spirit. Is too much. For his disciples. To bear. At this time. If you look at. Verses. Twelve. Onwards.

And in a sense. The disciples. Spiritual maturity. Is lacking. They are unable. To cope. With the levels. Of information. That Jesus.

Is giving them. Much like. Many of us. Are not able. To cope. With the barrage. And overload. Of information. About. That we are receiving. About the GST. At the moment. But Jesus.

Goes on to say. In verse 13. When the spirit. Of truth. Comes. He will guide you. Into all truth. Now at this point. In time.

It's important. To remember. Jesus. His disciples. Where they are. At this point in time. They're living. Before the cross. And before the day of Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit.

[24 : 18] Is being poured out. But on that day. On that day of Pentecost. When the spirit. Comes. Many things. Will fall into place. The light. Will go on.

They. There will be this. Great. Aha. Yes. I see what. Jesus has said now. On that day of Pentecost. Many things. For the disciples. Will fall into place.

You see. When the spirit. Comes. He will have. A discipling role. If you like. For the disciples. And the things. That Jesus is saying. Now. Will make sense.

Then. And they will be given. A new boldness. To speak. God's word. As we. Have seen. With that. Peter's boldness. As he spoke. His first sermon. In the book of Acts.

Now verse 13. Goes on. And it says. But the spirit. Will not speak. On his own. But will speak. Whatever he hears. And there is a closeness. Between.

[25 : 16] Jesus. And the Holy Spirit. Here. And the truth. Into which the Holy Spirit. Will guide the disciples. Is the truth. About Jesus.

There will be no. Contradiction. Between the two. The Holy Spirit. Will not make up. His own forms. Of teaching. But he will speak. Only the words. That he is given.

To speak. From the father. Father. And that has already. Been spoken of. By. By the son. And this verse. Goes on to say. At the end.

And he will declare. To you. The things. That are to come. As I said earlier. The disciples. Didn't understand. Everything that Jesus. Was telling them.

But after his death. And his resurrection. And with the outpouring. Of the Holy Spirit. Which Jesus promised. The disciples. Many truths.

[26 : 11] Were revealed. To them. And they wrote down. These truths. In what is now. Before you. The New Testament. And not very least.

This gospel of John. These truths. Were written down. Were inspired by God. Given to. The disciples. And his people. To write down.

So Jesus says. That I am going. The disciples. Are a bit sad. But we can see. That it was vital. That Jesus went. So the spirit.

The third person. Of the Holy Trinity. Of the Trinity. Would come. Well there's lots more. That I could say. But I want to conclude.

With these. Just a few comments. I believe. That the Holy Spirit. Gave the disciples. Special inspiration.

[27 : 09] To do. And write down. The things. That they did. Thus we have. The New Testament. And the full canon. Of scripture. Before us. I believe also.

That the Holy Spirit's. Ministry today. Is to continue. To convict us. Of our sin. Of our false sense. Of righteousness. And our false sense.

Of judgment. If you like. And the Holy Spirit's. Role is to teach. His people. In understanding. And applying. The truths of scripture. To our own lives.

And the Holy Spirit. Or the advocate. Also has. A discipling role. Which seeks. To bring glory. To Jesus. By revealing. The greatness.

And the fullness. Of his salvation. Now the Father. Has put everything. At Jesus disposal. If you look at. John chapter 5. Verses 19 and 20.

[28 : 07] Tell us that. The Father. Has put everything. At Jesus disposal. And now. With this promised. Coming. Of the Holy Spirit. He will share. The fullness.

With his disciples. Who will in turn. Be equipped. To take the good news. Of Jesus. To the world. And proclaim it. Boldly. As we see. Throughout the book.

Of Acts. And also. The Holy Spirit. Will enable us. To do the same. Today. No matter. What circumstances. We may find. Ourselves in. Well let me pray.

And then we're going to sing. A song. Our Heavenly Father. We thank you. That you sent. Your son.

Who revealed. The truth. To his disciples. About the way. Back. Into a relationship. With you. We thank you.

[29 : 01] For your Holy Spirit. That was promised. And sent. And Lord. That your spirit. Teaches us. And guides us. Into all truth. Please help us.

To see. The Holy Spirit's work. In our own lives. As he convicts us. Of our sin. Of our righteousness. And our judgment.

And Lord. May we see. Your spirit's truth. In all that we do. Thank you Father. For sending us your son. And sending your spirit.

Until your work on earth. Is done. Amen.