

Double barrelled support

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Preacher: Steve Jeffrey

- [0 : 0 0] Good morning friends, it's great to be here at church with you this morning. We as a church have a vision to grow, St Paul's has a vision to grow. It's a vision which was put before you a bit over two years ago, or actually about two years ago.
- It's not the only time you've had one of these visions, you've had them in the past. The vision fundamentally is not for people to come from other churches to this church, but it's a vision for people to come to Christ.
- And as you look at that vision for 10 congregations of 100 core members in about 10 years, when you look at that, do you think it's possible?
- Do you think it's possible? Some of you will be sceptical because of the world in which we live. It's going further and further away from Christianity. Some of you are weary of bearing witness to Jesus and having so many rejections, and you wonder whether it's possible.
- Some of you are pumped up and think it's absolutely possible, because what we'll do is we just bludgeon people until they become, we just annoy them until they turn to Christ. And so for those of you who are not discouraged, I think maybe you should be.
- [1 : 2 3] And those of you who are, these are words of encouragement and comfort here from the Lord Jesus. And so grab your Bibles and turn to John 16.
- You need your Bibles open in front of you. I'd like you to follow along with me. John 16, I'm going to focus primarily on verses 5 to 15. And it was great to have the rest of it read, but we're going to focus on 5 to 15.
- So we're still with Jesus and the 11 disciples in the last few hours of Jesus' life in what is known as the farewell discourse. For the disciples, it seems that it has been mostly bad news up until this point.
- Verse 5 indicates that all this talk of Jesus' impending departure of the Father via the cross has reduced the disciples to virtual silence.
- Or as verse 6 says, They are filled with grief. The disciples are so self-absorbed that they are not really asking sympathetic questions about what Jesus is doing, where he's going, and why.
- [2 : 3 2] They are so concerned about their problems, their own feeling of abandonment, their sense of impending crisis and doom, that they do not really listen.
- They grieve for themselves. And yet in verse 7, Jesus says, But I tell you the truth, it is for your good that I'm going away.
- Unless I go away, the counsellor will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you. Jesus is saying to these grieving disciples, feeling the sense of abandonment, it's going to be better for you once I return to the Father, because once I've gone, the Holy Spirit will come.
- How is that possible? How is it going to be better for them? I mean, is this just another one of those good news, bad news jokes, where the good news isn't really the good news after all?

Like the one I heard of the doctor who visited a patient after surgery and said to him, I've got some good news and some bad news. The bad news is we amputated the wrong leg.

[3 : 39] The good news is the bad leg is improving. Now, the good news actually isn't good news. It's just simply designed to stake the sting out of the bad news.

And is that what Jesus is doing here in verse 7? Jesus says, I think at least a couple of things in this section that makes the coming of the Holy Spirit good news.

This is really good news. This is especially important for grieving disciples who have heard a lot of bad news up until this point. Not only is Jesus departing, but they've just heard, as we looked at last week when Sam was preaching, that when Jesus departs, the world is going to hate them for his sake.

I mean, does it get any worse than this? And so here's the good news in the coming of the Holy Spirit in this section. Number one, the Holy Spirit will convict the world. And number two, the Holy Spirit will minister to the disciples.

We saw last week that with the departure of Jesus, it will be the disciples who will bear witness to him. But it will be tough because the world is opposed to Jesus.

[4 : 49] The word is, they will hate you for me. Jesus is, in effect, passing on the baton of the task of telling the world about him to his disciples.

But the good news here is they're not going to do it alone. They're not alone in this task. In fact, I think it would actually be more accurate to say that Jesus is passing on the baton, the task of telling the world about Jesus to the Holy Spirit.

So in chapter 15, verse 26, just flick back a little bit, Jesus says, When the counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

So the one who is going to testify is no longer Jesus, but it is the Spirit. And then if you look into chapter 16, verse 7, But I tell you the truth, it is for your good that I'm going away.

Unless I go away, the counsellor will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.

[6 : 04] That little word convict in verse 8, I think is the key to understanding verses 8 to 11. Convict means to bring to light, or it means to expose.

And it has the idea of an exposure which puts to shame. So the aim of the Holy Spirit's work is not to produce a guilty verdict, because that is already there according to John chapter 3.

The aim is to help us to see the perilous condition in which we stand before God. It's like a bright spotlight shining into a dark night, cutting through the darkness and revealing whatever was hidden in the darkness.

The Spirit comes to shine light into the world. But what we need to see is it happens as the disciples testify to what Jesus has done, that the Spirit is doing his work of convicting and exposing the world.

So I'll read again from chapter 15, verse 26. When the counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

[7 : 21] And then look at the very next verse. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning. And so the way that the Spirit will convict the world is as the disciples bear witness to Jesus.

Verses 8 to 11 are the central verses of this section, and they reveal how the Spirit will convict the world. He will point the spotlight, if you like, and he will expose three areas.

The attitudes of the world, the actions of the world, and the accountability of the world. Firstly, when the Spirit comes, he will convict the world, verse 9, in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me.

Sin is where we place ourselves at the centre of the universe. It's an attitude that says, I am the king. Sin doesn't recognise that Jesus is God's appointed king.

And Jesus says that he will send the Spirit, and he will be at work in the world, bringing people to a self-conscious recognition of personal and collective guilt.

[8 : 38] The Spirit will expose the way people reject God, and the way that they have rejected Jesus. That they do not believe his claims, that they do not accept his teaching, that they do not turn to him for salvation or discern their need of him.

The Spirit will come, and as disciples speak, he will convict the world of their sin, of rejecting Jesus. Secondly, the Spirit will expose the actions of the world, and this has to do with the moral side of sin.

In verse 10, in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer. It is quite amazing that, as you read through John's Gospel, to see how often Jesus clashed with religious people, with people who thought that they were doing pretty much okay.

But as Jesus interacts with them, what he does is he exposes them as to being complete fakes, as being shams. And so the conviction in regard to righteousness here has an ironic edge to it.

People of the world do not normally think of themselves as lost, as sinners. We struggle with that. We have a much better view of ourselves than we ought.

[10 : 03] We naturally think of ourselves as essentially righteous until you have Jesus standing beside you.

I used to play tennis every week. And after a while, I started to think I wasn't too bad at the game. When you play with people who are 10 to 15 years older than you, it's not hard to think, generally.

You pick your opponents well. I knew I wasn't the best of the game. I could see that. But I certainly had my fair share of on days and a few off days as well.

It wasn't until I did wedding prep with a guy once, I went there before going to tennis, and I had my tennis gear, and he said, you play tennis? I said, yeah, I do. And he said, fantastic.

Fantastic. After a few weeks, he said, I play the occasional game of tennis. We should play one day. Awesome. So this guy was younger than me, so I thought at the very least, I'll get some exercise.

[11 : 06] And so we get up there, and the first service told me that I had made a grave mistake. This guy was an A-grade tennis player. And so I'm standing there.

I'm seeing him serve. I know the ball's going to go to the right. He does a beautiful kick in his serve. I dive to the right, and the ball goes to the left. There's no...

What? This guy could make a tennis ball do magic. It was amazing. Eventually, I'd just stand there and just let me watch you play. You know, and in the end, he thrashed me.

I got no point from him. He didn't even make a mistake in order for me to get a point. He thrashed me. And so the next time, he said, we should do this again someday. Yes. When I get over this demoralising defeat, I will do that.

Next time, I brought in someone else, and we played doubles against him. And he thrashed us both. And so the way to handle that is just never invite him back again.

[12 : 06] And that's what we did. You see, after playing with him for a very short time, I realised I wasn't such a hotshot. Perfection does that for you.

It exposes your weaknesses and your inadequacies. And that is what the perfect life of Jesus did with everyone he met.

Compared with Jesus, even the good things that we do, which are mixed with bad motives, are like filthy rags beside Jesus. Until a person who is satisfied with their own righteousness perceives its inadequacy, its self-centredness, its shortcomings, its imperfections, it is difficult to perceive how the good news of the gospel will ever be received as good news.

The good news is that in trusting Jesus, not only is our sin placed on Jesus, but his perfect righteousness is placed on us.

It becomes ours. But if it is just the work of the Holy Spirit to show up the false righteousness of the world, now that Jesus returned to the Father, what part do the disciples play in that?

[13 : 26] If we are walking with him and he's our partner in this, we know it is the Holy Spirit who's bare witness, but the disciples must also bear witness.

In a sense, we join the Holy Spirit in preserving the presence of Christ in our Christ-rejecting world. The Holy Spirit in part discharges his witnessing responsibility by transforming the righteousness of the disciples.

The Holy Spirit works in the disciple of Jesus to produce deep biblical righteousness which convicts the world of its unrighteousness.

Our lives matter. Our righteousness matters. the world ought to be convicted of their unrighteousness by our righteousness.

So whether it is through his own secret operation or through the disciples of Jesus, the Spirit is actively transforming.

[14 : 45] Through the disciples of Jesus, he's actively transforming, he confronts the world with the inadequacy of its own self-righteousness. The third exposing work of the Holy Spirit is that he will expose the world to accountability.

People are not right with God because they have rejected Christ and therefore they deserve God's punishment. And the Holy Spirit's job is in effect to pull our heads out of the sand so that we can recognize the grave danger that we are in.

the Holy Spirit helps us to see that we are on a collision course of judgment with God and that on that process of that collision course that all our judgments about Christ and about God and about the spiritual realm and about life and death are all wrong judgments without the Spirit.

And so how does the Spirit do that? Verse 11 He will expose the world of judgment because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

He's talking about Satan when he talks about the prince of this world. One of the first things that happened when Hitler was overthrown was that all his cronies apart from those who committed suicide and those who were captured they headed off to South America.

[16 : 07] Hitler had fallen and their own downfall and their own judgment was a certainty as a result. And so as Jesus goes to the cross he sets in motion a sequence of events almost like a domino effect.

Because Satan has been judged then the overthrow of every individual who belongs to him is a certainty. If your attitude to Jesus is one of rejection then you are in fact siding with the prince of this world.

And your eventual overthrow like his your eventual judgment is a dead certainty. And so the Holy Spirit shines the light of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in such a way that our hearts and our minds our judgments are all exposed for what they are.

False. Fake. You see having cotton onto the onto the fact that our attitude is one of rebellion having seen our actions as like filthy rags to God it is clear that we are accountable to God and that my friends is not the work of your intellect it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Without the work of the Spirit shining that into your heart and into your mind you are not capable of seeing it. The world is so depraved left to our own devices we are so depraved we fail to discern what sin righteousness and judgment really are and only by the Spirit's deep convicting work can we ever hope to recognize the magnitude of our misconceptions and our gross unbelief.

[18:18] And so these verses I believe serve to foster a quiet confidence in the heart of every believer as we face the responsibility to bear witness to Jesus.

These verses firstly humble us and realize what we are not capable of doing and secondly they are there to foster a quiet confidence in the heart of every believer with the responsibility to bear witness to Jesus.

we look around the world and we wonder how we can ever persuade people to believe in the gospel of the Lord Jesus it just seems like nuts on the surface we know we don't want to stoop to gimmicks and playing tricks and manipulation and we know that in the end intellectual arguments why they're helpful they alone don't guarantee anything because it's not a matter of the intellect we know of people who know certain facts about Christianity who probably even know the right facts about Jesus and yet who refuse to trust Jesus we often wonder how will we ever penetrate the wall of unbelief how will we ever penetrate the wall of unbelief in Chatswood let me tell you I would quit Christian ministry immediately if I was not convinced that it's the Lord

Jesus who is building his church and if it wasn't that the father had given people to his son and that the Holy Spirit is working in the world to convict the world of its sin and its righteousness and its judgment I have no confidence that on my own I could successfully persuade anyone including my children and I can persuade them of most things I have no confidence on my own that I could successfully persuade anyone of their deepest need and of the truth of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore I find this passage comforting I have not been abandoned to do the task of bearing witness to the Lord Jesus such a perspective feels my labour and ought to feel your labour for Christ with such a supreme significance that it ought to obliterate any fear of failure because your work for the

Lord is not in vain but wait there's more there's more to come from this passage I was tempted to leave it there but we'd only probably filled in 15 minutes some of you may say that's enough there is a second ministry the Holy Spirit and it is linked and it is very precious it's there in verse 12 I have much more to say to you much more than you can now bear and so there is a sense where these eleven can't take any more from Jesus because their confusion and grief they are experiencing and there's also a sense where they can't fully grasp it until after the death and resurrection and ascension of Jesus there's not clarity to what Jesus is saying at this point for them and so here's the second aspect of the Holy Spirit's work he will complete the revelation of God in Jesus

[22 : 15] Christ verse 13 but when he the spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all truth he will not speak on his own he will speak only what he hears and he will tell you what is yet to come chapter 14 in chapter 14 Jesus promised that the spirit of truth will remind the disciples of everything that Jesus taught them now he is promising something a little bit more the 11 disciples will be led into a true understanding of the saving events which are about to take place they will get clarity on the death and resurrection and ascension of Jesus and they will be given glimpses of the future the final climax of world history will partially be unveiled to them so that they will be able to get a glimpse of the sweep of God's enormous plan of salvation and the central part that Jesus plays in it all that's a promise for a confused bewildering disciples but in leading them to this truth the Holy

Spirit was not going to speak on his own Jesus insists he will speak only what he hears the spirit will only speak of what he hears verse 13 but when he the spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all truth he will not speak on his own he will speak only what he hears and he will tell you what is yet to come he will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you all that belongs to the father is mine that is why I said the spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you and so what these verses saying is that the general subject matter of the spirit is restricted but it is a glorious restriction the spirit will take that which is Jesus is and make it known to the disciples of Jesus and so the focus here is entirely on

Jesus even when the spirit comes the role of the spirit here is to bring glory to Jesus as it says it was necessary for Jesus to be glorified by going to the father by way of the cross but when he leaves it's not time now for the spirit to receive glory but for Christ to receive more glory through the ministry of the spirit and that of his disciples as Jesus took that which belongs to the father and made it known to his disciples so the spirit takes that which belongs to Jesus and makes it known to us nothing brings more glory to our Lord Jesus than for his followers to become steeped in all truth concerning him let me just say that again nothing brings more glory to our

Lord Jesus than for his followers to become steeped in all truth concerning him of course the acquisition of that truth is intellectual but it is not merely intellectual so if you're down the line which says we need to abandon intellectualism in the Christian faith you need to feel stuff about the spirit you're wrong if you're down the other line and says what we need to do is sit and contemplate and just intellectualize this stuff and not be moved to worship out of the heart you're wrong as this truth is truly absorbed by the followers of the

Lord Jesus it transforms us enabling us to reflect the righteousness and the glory of the Lord Jesus and thereby bring praise to his name glory comes to Jesus when the truths of the gospel are established in our lives in such a way that we are overwhelmed to the point of praise and overflow in righteousness and so the bad news the disciples are grieving over here is that Jesus going to the cross is in fact actually the good news it really is good news it is good news for us and it was good news for them and it's in fact good news for the rest of the world and so can I say I just want to praise God that we are not left alone to do this work of bearing witness to Jesus in

[27 : 45] Chatswood and beyond Chatswood we're not left alone to that task if you feel inadequate to that task I think you probably should praise God that the spirit is at work in this world bringing conviction as we faithfully and boldly speak out the truth of the gospel praise God that the work of the spirit is bringing the truths of Christ into my life and I pray that he will continue to bring transformation to me and to you so that we shine forth not just the truth of the gospel but the life of righteousness as well so may we consistently here at St. Paul's rely upon the spirit for empowerment to lead us into all truth and for that truth to bring transformation to our lives and for that transformation that truth to have an impact in such a way that we bear witness to this world and the spirit will bring conviction to people's lives for their great need for Christ for his glory forever and ever

Amen