

# The Helper Has Come!

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Preacher: Jonathan Chancey

[ 0 : 00 ] Amen. Please open your Bibles up to the Gospel according to John, chapter 16, this morning. We are back in John after taking a brief month-long break during the month of January, and we're in the homestretch now.

Just ten sermons remaining in the Gospel according to John, if you can believe it. So this morning we're going to be in chapter 16, and I will start in the second half of verse 4 and read all the way through verse 15.

So when you found that in your Bibles, if you would, let's stand together for the reading of God's Word. John, chapter 16, listen along as I read verse 4 through 15. Jesus says, 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.

[ 1 : 16 ] 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. All that the Father has is mine.

Therefore, I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. This is God's holy word. Lord, we praise you for this word. And we pray now that you would do what this text has promised.

That you would, by your Spirit, guide us into all the truth. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. You may have heard it said before that last words are meant to be lasting words.

[ 2 : 18 ] Well, here in this section of John's Gospel, we are functioning like flies on the wall, listening in on some of Jesus' last words to his disciples. And I'll remind you kind of where we are in the place of John's Gospel, since it's been a while since we've been in this book, that this is Thursday.

This is the final day of Jesus' earthly life before the events of Friday, before the events of the cross. These are the quickly passing, precious moments before he is betrayed, before he's arrested, before he's tried, before he's hung on a cross.

And knowing this, Jesus spends his final moments here comforting and encouraging his disciples and preparing them for what's to come. And I want us to place ourselves for a moment in the disciples' shoes.

And imagine how they must be feeling. I don't know if you've ever been with someone in the final moments before their earthly life is over, in the final moments before they die. Those moments are weighty.

And most of you know that I went to go see my grandmother last fall, in the moments leading up to her death. And I'll tell you, every word was precious. Every squeeze of the hand was precious.

[ 3 : 34 ] Every moment that we had left with her was precious. And we, the family, selfishly, we did not want her to go. But we knew, even so, as hard as it would be for us to let her go, that it would be much better for her.

She was a believer. We knew that she was going to be with the Lord. And that it's to her advantage that she go. Well, here, you can imagine, again, the disciples.

They did not want Jesus to go. They did not want Jesus to leave. As much as he had prepared them for this moment, as much as he had told them that I am getting ready to go to the Father, they did not want him to go.

They loved him as a teacher. They loved him as a friend. And Jesus knows this. He recognizes this. So he says in verse 6, he says, Well, because I've said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

Well, of course it has. But then he says something surprising in verse 7. Look there with me.

Nevertheless, he says, verse 7, It is to your advantage that I go away.

[ 4 : 45 ] How can that be? How can that be? It might be better for you, Jesus, to go. We know where you're going. It might be better for you to go. You're going up to be with the Father. You're going to reclaim the glory that you had before the ages began.

But how in the world could it be better for us that you go? How is your leaving an advantage to us?

Well, he tells us.

Look at verse 7 again. He says, For if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you. You know, I've heard people say before, Well, I just wish I could have been there with Jesus.

Now, I wish I could have walked with Jesus. I wish I could have witnessed his miracles firsthand. I wish I could have been there on the Sermon on the Mount and sat there and listened to his teaching firsthand.

Well, I know it's hard to believe. But what this passage teaches us this morning is that it is even better for us right now in the age of the Holy Spirit than it was for his disciples who lived and walked with Jesus for three years on earth.

[ 5 : 50 ] Can you believe that? The Holy Spirit, the helper, is a tremendous advantage to us as believers.

This is what this passage is teaching us this morning. We've already seen in the Gospel of John that the Spirit, we've seen some of his work, the Spirit is the one who gives life. You must be born again of the Spirit, not of the flesh, in order to enter into the kingdom of God.

We've seen even in the same conversation here in the upper room, Jesus has promised another helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him.

You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. John 14, 16, and 17. He's told us that this Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and will bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

John 14, verse 26. He's told us, when the helper comes, whom I will send from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

[ 6 : 58 ] See, in this conversation, Jesus is preparing the disciples and he's preparing us for what life looks like in the age of the Holy Spirit. He's teaching us and his disciples a little bit about the person and the work of the Holy Spirit and why, how, this is an advantage for us.

And here in our passage, verses 8 through 15, Jesus tells us two final works of the Holy Spirit. Two final works of the Holy Spirit.

First, he says that the Holy Spirit convicts. The Holy Spirit convicts. Look there at verses 8 through 11. Starting in verse 8, Jesus says, when he, the Spirit, comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

See, the first work of the Holy Spirit here is the work of conviction. There was a time, and maybe we're still in it, I don't know, I feel like maybe we've grown out of this a little bit.

There was a time when felt needs ministry became very popular in the church in America.

Everything was geared towards being seeker sensitive.

[ 8 : 16 ] I mean, making sure that the worship service was as comfortable and as appealing and as accessible as possible to non-believers. pastors would speak on whatever they thought might be appealing to the crowds, whatever the felt needs of the crowds might be.

Of course, they would use the Bible to get there. They used the Bible as a launching point to get to that felt need. But I'll tell you something, if the goal is simply to draw a crowd and to make non-believers feel good and feel at ease and feel comfortable, I'll tell you a few things that you will never hear or see in a seeker sensitive worship service.

you will not have many prayers of confession we had this morning. That doesn't feel great. It's a little bit awkward, isn't it?

A little bit naming sins in public, talking about sin. You probably won't hear much talk about sin at all. And if you do, it probably would be minimize the weight of sin, the severity of sin.

Maybe it would be talked about as something that you can overcome or grow out of, not as an eternal offense against a holy God. You probably won't hear many difficult sermons, difficult texts preached.

[ 9 : 29 ] You know, one of the advantages of not preaching passage by passage through a book of the Bible, the advantage for the preacher is they get to hop right over difficult or controversial text and preach whatever might feel good to the people who would hear it.

You probably won't hear many theologically rich songs, songs that aim to teach rather than just to make you feel something. I kid you not, I hesitated whether to share this.

It's not here. I've been to a church service in the past where as part of the worship service, they sang a song from a popular movie at the time, O Brother, Where Art Thou?

and they played a clip from one of the Rocky movies as a part of the worship service, as a part of their attempt to connect with the non-believers in the room.

All of that because the aim was to make non-believers feel comfortable. Here's my point. Could it be that what non-believers need is not to be made comfortable?

[ 10 : 33 ] Welcomed, yes, loved, yes, invited, yes, but not invited to a cheap knock-off of their own culture.

Invited to hear the Word of God and to see the people of God worship and to be a part of what the Spirit of God is doing in the midst of the people of God, to see the Spirit of God at work.

Jesus says here the Spirit doesn't come to comfort the world. What does He come to do? He comes to convict the world. Now don't mishear me.

There's comfort to be had in the Holy Spirit. Amen? In other translations, He's called the comforter even in this own passage. The comforter. I will send to you the comforter. But that comfort comes after conviction.

There is no comfort for any sinner who has not been convicted of his sin repented of his sin and trusted in Christ. The Spirit, Jesus says, comes to convict the world and He does so in three main categories.

[ 11 : 42 ] Look here with me. He says, He convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. Concerning sin, He says in verse 9, because they do not believe in Me.

This is the biggest problem in the world. We spoke about this last week, didn't we? The biggest problem facing the world today is that men and women all over the globe do not believe in Jesus.

And the reason that they don't believe in Jesus is because they have been blinded by sin. What we need, more than anything, is not to be made comfortable. What we need is to see our sin for what it is, to see the holiness of God for what He is, and to see our need for Christ to bridge that gap.

We need to be convicted of our sin or we cannot be saved. There has to be a genuine recognition that you are a sinner in need of a Savior, and only the Holy Spirit can give you that spiritual sight.

He says, He comes to convict the world concerning righteousness. Verse 10, Because I go to the Father and you will see Me no longer. Now, let me ask you something.

[ 12 : 57 ] Why in the world would we need to be convicted concerning righteousness? I understand we need to be convicted concerning sin. Why in the world do we need to be convicted concerning righteousness?

What does this mean? Well, I read a handful of commentaries here concerning this verse and surprise, surprise, people are all over the map divided on what they think this might mean. Let me tell you what I think is going on here.

I think we have a clue, actually, in the context of our passage. Look up to verse 2, chapter 16, verse 2. I think this is an example of what Jesus is talking about, about being convicted concerning righteousness.

In verse 2, Jesus is preparing His disciples for persecution. Up to this point, Jesus has functioned as a sort of persecution magnet. All of the persecution has come to Him.

His disciples have had it pretty easy up to this point. But guess what? Now He's leaving and who's going to be left to collect all the persecution? His disciples. And so He prepares them and He says this in verse 2.

[14:03] He says, they will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.

And they will do these things because they have not known the Father nor me. Did you hear that? Whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.

Jesus is telling them that the persecutions that the disciples are about to endure in the minds of those who are persecuting, they are righteous acts.

In the minds of those who are bringing the persecution to the persecutors, these are God-honoring, God-serving acts of righteousness. But Jesus says they don't even know the Father.

So how could they possibly know righteousness? righteousness. It's a broken system of righteousness. And in a similar way, I would argue that all of us, everyone in the world, lives within a false system of righteousness.

[15:16] A broken understanding of right and wrong, holy and impure, until the Holy Spirit convicts us and shows us the truth, which is that we have no righteousness.

And we need to understand that the world standard of righteousness is broken. Our good is not God's good. Our righteousness is not God's righteousness.

And he says the Holy Spirit will convict the world of their righteousness because I am going to the Father. You know what Jesus loved to do? Jesus loved upsetting the false righteousness of the world, didn't he?

Jesus loved to show the Pharisees in particular that their version of righteousness was empty. It was vain. It was worthless. It was not true righteousness.

But now Jesus is leaving. So who's going to do that work of convicting the world of their false righteousness? He says the Holy Spirit will come. The Holy Spirit shows us that our system of right and wrong, good and bad, good enough for God is completely broken.

[16:30] He shows us that all of our righteous deeds are filthy rags. That we have nothing good whatsoever to bring to God that would make him more inclined to accept us.

He convicts us of righteousness. One of my favorite songs says, nothing in my hands I bring. Simply to thy cross I cling.

Naked come to thee for dress. Helpless look to thee for grace. Foul I to the fountain fly. Wash me Savior or I die. See, when we're convicted of our lack of righteousness, what that does in our hearts is it makes us feel our need for true righteousness, true holiness that cannot come from within us. It must be given to us by someone else and exactly what God does in the gospel is he gives to us the righteousness that he demands from us. God provides to us sinners, unworthy sinners, provides to us the perfection that he demands from us, not because of our goodness, but because of the perfect righteousness of Christ credited to sinners by faith.

That's the work of the Holy Spirit. The last category here, the Spirit convicts, he says, verse 11, concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

[17:57] And he's talking about Satan, the enemy. Now I want you to think with me for a moment about what happened at the cross of Christ. When Jesus gave his life, what happened?

Well, sin was defeated in him. And when he rose from the grave, what happened? Death was defeated in him. He conquered death. And as he accomplished his plan of God for the salvation of sinners, what happened?

Well, the enemy was judged. His verdict is in. The judgment is in. The final judgment is yet to come, yes, but the verdict is already in.

He is done. The death and resurrection of Jesus was a fatal and devastating blow to the enemy and to his kingdom and to all who belong to his kingdom.

And so Jesus tells us one of the works of the spirit is to open up our eyes to see that following him is in vain. Belonging to Satan's kingdom is in vain.

[19:03] It's the work of the spirit of God to take a sinner, someone who belongs to the kingdom of this world, someone who by nature and by choice walks in the way of Satan as an enemy of God to take that person and to convince them that this path, this way of life is in vain.

It's a sinking ship. It's crashing quickly towards judgment. The verdict is already in. See, the spirit takes the truth of God, applies it to your heart so that you see that life is in vain and my only hope is Christ.

He transfers you from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his beloved son. The spirit. He convicts the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.

But church, let me ask you this. How in the world is that an advantage to us? How in the world is that an advantage to us? Well, for one, if you are a Christian, you are a beneficiary of this work of the spirit.

If you are a Christian, it's because the spirit of God has come to you convicting you of your sin, convicting you of your lack of righteousness, of your need for Christ's righteousness, convicting you of the coming judgment against your sin, and showing you the only hope you have is Christ in the gospel.

[ 20 : 29 ] That convicting work is to our advantage because it doesn't stop at conversion, does it? We continue all through our life as Christians. the spirit continues to convict us of sin, continues to guide us in righteousness, continues to teach us and remind us that we live every day now in light of that great coming day when Christ returns.

That's a work of the spirit in us. It's to our advantage, church. It's also to our advantage because it gives us confidence in our mission, doesn't it?

Again, put yourself in the disciples' shoes. In a matter of hours, Jesus is going to be arrested, he's going to die, he's going to rise again and appear to you, and he's going to commission the disciples to go into the world as his witnesses.

They're about to be tasked with taking the mission, taking the message of the gospel, going and making disciples of all nations, teaching and proclaiming to all the world all that Jesus has said and done.

How can you have any confidence whatsoever that anyone will listen to your message? Jesus reminds them that their power for their proclamation of the gospel, it does not rest within them.

[ 21 : 47 ] What does he say in Acts 1.8? He says, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria to the uttermost ends of the world.

people. And so it is with us, church. We cannot convict anyone of their sin. We don't have the power within us to convert one sinner into the kingdom of God.

We are unable to do it. But Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit, as we proclaim the truth faithfully and obediently as we go, the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. The Spirit will convict. And second, he tells us that the Spirit will guide into the truth. First, the Spirit convicts.

Second, the second work of the Spirit here in this passage, verses 12 through 15, we see the Spirit guides into the truth. Look there, starting in verse 12. Jesus says, I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

[ 23 : 03 ] 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 will take what is mine and declare it to you.

How would I summarize the work of the Holy Spirit? I do it like this. The Holy Spirit's work is to bring glory to Jesus by speaking the truth of who he is and what he's done into the hearts of sinners.

I'll say that again. The work of the Holy Spirit, primarily, is to bring glory to Jesus by declaring the truth of who he is and what he's done.

Declaring it in power so that we believe it and love it and trust it. This passage, I love this passage because it gets right at the heart of the work of the Holy Spirit.

[ 24 : 14 ] I want you to notice that we see a glimpse here of the Trinity at work. All three members of the Godhead, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, we believe that God is three persons, blessed Trinity.

Amen? We see all three at work here in this passage. We believe God is three in one. Father, Son, Holy Spirit, one God, three persons. This is not simple, but it is basic, fundamental Christianity, 101. I want us to go just a step further here. Okay? This is who God is. He is Trinity. Theologians call this the ontological Trinity.

That's a big word. Okay? I won't ask you to spell it. Every member of the Trinity, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, is 100% God. He is not divided up into parts.

He's not one-third here, one-third here, one-third here. And so when we talk about God the Father, we are talking about God. When we talk about Jesus, the Son of God, we are talking about God.

[ 25 : 20 ] When we talk about the Holy Spirit, we are talking about God. That's who He is, the ontological Trinity. And yet, at the same time, we have to be careful and clear to make clear distinctions when we talk about what God does, how God functions, how each member of the Godhead, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, how they play out their roles, miracles, particularly in the work of redemption.

And when we talk about what each person of the Trinity is doing, this is what we call the economic Trinity. The ontological Trinity is who God is, the economic Trinity is how God functions, particularly how each member functions in the work of salvation.

Is everybody with me? Y'all tracking with me? Okay. Think about it like this. The great work of salvation. Well, you and I are the beneficiaries of the reason why we're gathered here as a church proclaiming the message of the gospel.

The work of salvation was arranged by God the Father, primarily. It was accomplished by God the Son, and it is applied by God the Spirit.

I'll say that again. God the Father, arranged our salvation. He planned it out in eternity past alongside the Spirit, alongside the Son. God the Son is the one who actually stepped into human history and accomplished this plan by living, by dying, by rising, and the Spirit now is the one who takes that finished work of Jesus and applies it to the hearts of sinners by declaring the truth in power.

[ 27 : 16 ] Are you with me? That's the work of the Spirit. That's what Jesus says the Spirit will come and do. He says, He will glorify me for He will take what is mine and declare it to you.

And this is why, by the way, the Spirit doesn't come until after Christ has gone. You know why? It's because at the very heart of the Spirit's work is the announcing and applying the finished work of Christ.

Christ. The very basis and substance of the Spirit's work is the Son's work. Until that work is finished, until the cross is completed, until the resurrection is completed, the Spirit's work cannot begin in full.

The Spirit's work, His role, is to transform our mind and our heart so that we grasp and we love the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ. And this is how He convicts the world of sin, by the way.

This is how He shows us righteousness, by the way. This is how He shows us judgment, by the way. He shines as a beacon pointing us towards the cross of Christ, what Christ has done makes much of the glory of Christ.

[ 28 : 32 ] The Spirit, the role of the Holy Spirit is to bring glory to Christ by taking the finished work of Jesus and the words of Jesus and applying them in power to our hearts so that we see and are convinced that this is true.

This is good. This is worthy of my life. That's the work of the Spirit. You know, that's what it means to be a Christian. What it means to be a Christian is that by the grace of God, the Spirit of God has taken the work and words of Christ, applied them to your heart so that you believe, and love the glory of King Jesus.

And if you're sitting here and you just don't understand what all the fuss is about with Jesus, and why we talk so much about Jesus, why we sing these songs that teach us about Jesus, why we make such a big deal about the glory of Jesus, what you need more than anything is for the Spirit of God to open the eyes of your heart to see Him for who He is.

Now, I want to apply this to us because this is full of application for us, but first, we have to apply it to the disciples because there's a particular unique application to them that's unique to them.

We can't make a beeline straight to us. I know we want to. That's how we tend to read the Bible, but this is a conversation between Jesus and His disciples. He says, I still have many things to say to you, disciples, but you, disciples, you cannot bear them now.

[ 30 : 08 ] When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you, disciples, into all the truth. He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears, He will speak, and He will declare to you, twelve disciples, the things that are to come.

We need to understand this promise is not primarily directly about us. It's not primarily to us or for us. It is to these disciples who are about to see Jesus crucified.

So what's the promise for them? Well, it's a promise that once Jesus is gone, the Spirit will come and He will do what the Spirit does.

He will clarify for them in their hearts with supernatural accuracy and power who Jesus is and what Jesus accomplished on that cross.

He will teach them and show them with supernatural clarity and power what the resurrection means.

He will guide them into all the truth of the person and the work of Christ.

[ 31 : 13 ] All the truth that they had such a hard time wrapping their minds around while they walked with Jesus on earth for three years. He says, I have more to tell you now, but you can't handle it.

Once I go, the Spirit will come and will guide you into all the truth. And how do we know that this promise was kept, church? We have the finished word of God, completed word of God in our hands.

The finished Bible is the result of this promise fulfilled. The whole New Testament, think about this, the whole New Testament was written after Jesus died and ascended into heaven.

written after the events of the cross, after the events of the resurrection, the whole thing is an unpacking and applying of the work of Christ.

Christ crucified, Christ resurrected, Christ returning. How did these bumbling, fumbling men do this? These 12 disciples who couldn't tie their shoes while they were walking with Jesus, how in the world could they unpack the depths of the cross and the power of this book?

[ 32 : 26 ] The Holy Spirit came and revealed to them, guided them into all the truth and they wrote it down for our good.

I want us to know that this future-oriented revelation of divine truth was a promise primarily to them, not to us.

This sort of future-oriented authoritative witness finished with the book of revelation. And so our application is not to seek out further revelation from the Spirit beyond the finished word of God, beyond Christ, beyond the gospel.

It's to seek the Spirit's help, to seek His illumination that we might better understand and revel in what He's already revealed in Christ. I want to understand that application first, but there is more application for us.

And I want us just to think through this as we close because unfortunately, as you know, the Holy Spirit is one of the most misunderstood, misinterpreted, misapplied facets of the Christian life.

[ 33 : 45 ] Often he is sadly at best often misunderstood as some sort of just impersonal force, a power to be felt, maybe an experience waiting to be had, and at worst, he's misapplied as a tactic to manipulate and to deceive.

We have to be careful what we call spiritual. spiritual. And so we should understand, church, for us, that the Spirit is all about the truth.

You see that here? The Spirit of truth will guide you into all the truth. How? By declaring truth.

What's the truth? Jesus Himself has said, I am the truth.

If the Spirit is leading Christ's disciples further and deeper into truth, it cannot be anything beyond Christ Himself. And the Spirit is all about bringing glory to Christ by declaring who He is and what He's done.

And so the way that you and I can tell if a work is of the Spirit is not primarily how it makes you feel, how spectacular or how sensational it might appear, but whether or not it is all about Christ.

[ 34 : 58 ] Whether or not Christ is magnified in this work. Whether or not it's all about the glory of King Jesus. So here's what this means for us practically.

Any hunger for quote unquote spirituality that goes beyond the glory of Christ is not truly spiritual at all. Any revelation that distracts from the glory of Christ or detracts from the glory of Christ is not of the Spirit of God, it is of the enemy.

It's a lie. Paul tells us that if I or even an angel from heaven should proclaim another gospel from what I've taught to you, let him be accursed.

Any spiritual power that has an end in and of itself just to be amazed by demonstrations of spiritual power or even at worst to manipulate you into giving your time, giving your money, so you might see some more of that power, might get a little bit more of that power in your life, it's a lie.

It's not of God. The Holy Spirit wants to make much of Jesus. If you want to understand the work of the Spirit, church, our mission statement and the Spirit's mission statement is one and the same.

[ 36 : 17 ] We exist to magnify the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's what the Spirit aims to do. We have to be careful what we deem to be spiritual.

We can apply this to music. I'm going to start meddling here for a minute. I know music is emotional by nature, so I'll try and tread lightly here. I like to listen to soundtracks, movie soundtracks.

I think it's amazing you can listen to the soundtrack of a movie and be moved emotionally. You can be motivated, you can be saddened, you can be energized, you can be made to feel tension without a single word being sung.

That's powerful. That's why they add them to the movie. I don't know if you've ever watched a dramatic scene with the TV on mute. It just doesn't hit the same way, does it? The music, it moves you emotionally.

Now here's where it gets dangerous. You can very easily, very easily put words that are not true or not really substantial words that don't really say anything at all.

[ 37 : 30 ] Put them to a moving tune and sing them in a moving way and you have a hit worship song all of a sudden. And it feels so spiritual to sing it and you think it's spiritual to sing it because it moves you emotionally.

But I want to be as clear as I possibly can, church. Emotional does not equal spiritual. Can I say that again? Emotional does not equal spiritual.

Christ centered truth is spiritual. Truth and emotion ought to go together. They should go together.

But truth has to lead the way.

Emotions are a terrible leader. We have to be led by the truth and our emotions ought to follow. We can apply it to sermons.

I'll pick on myself here for a minute. Preaching. Did you all know I studied rhetoric in college? I got a degree in rhetoric.

[ 38 : 33 ] That's my bachelor's degree, which was actually very helpful. I enjoyed it. It taught me skills in public speaking and speaking persuasively and communicating effectively. But you know what I also learned?

There is a way to speak powerfully and persuasively where you don't really say anything at all.

Politicians are the kings of this.

But sadly, so are a lot of pastors. We shouldn't call a sermon powerful or spiritual just because it left us feeling a certain way.

we have to listen carefully, intently, with our Bibles open, with discernment to see whether or not Christ has been proclaimed.

Whether or not Christ has been preached. Has the gospel been preached this morning? A spiritual sermon is all about the glory of Jesus, whether it's from Genesis or Revelation or anywhere in between.

[ 39 : 44 ] And the goal of a preacher is to join the work of the Holy Spirit in saying, look at Jesus. Look at Jesus. Cling to Jesus.

Trust in Jesus. He is the glorious one who demands our praise. Last one. We can apply this to our growth as believers.

How do you grow as a Christian? How do you grow as a believer? one of the primary ways you can see if the Spirit is at work in your heart is that you begin to see the person and work of Christ as more and more and more precious to you.

More and more and more glorious. How do we do that? If you want to put yourself in the presence of the Spirit of God, the best place for you to be is wherever there is God exalting, Christ glorifying truth.

Jonathan Edwards called this laying yourself in the way of allurements. The world will offer you its own form of truth.

[ 41 : 04 ] Will it not? The world will offer you its own form of righteousness and you can have it. Or you can have Christ.

Lay yourself in the way of allurements. Put yourself daily in the word of God with the aim of seeing Christ more clearly. Put yourself under the preaching of the word of God.

Preaching that makes much of the glory of God in the gospel of Christ. And not to be entertained but to be enthralled with the word of God. Put yourself in a community of believers who are committed imperfectly yes but genuinely committed to growing and understanding and obeying and applying the truth to their life.

You know that's what I love about this church so much. We are small in number but I believe that the spirit of God is powerfully at work right here among us.

Don't you? So church as we go from this place this week fill your heart and your mind with the glory of Christ in the gospel and you will see the spirit work in power.

[ 42 : 18 ] Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord we thank you for the promised Holy Spirit. We thank you for sending the spirit of truth to convict us of our sin to convict us of false righteousness to convict us of coming judgment and to guide us to lead us into all the truth.

We thank you for Christ for his work on the cross which we'll proclaim and enjoy now through communion. We love you. We pray all this in Jesus name.  
Amen.