

May 28th, 2017

IT IS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE THAT I GO AWAY

John 16:1-15

We now come to very peculiar part Jesus' farewell discourse. Jesus just finished speaking about the hatred that the world will have for all of his disciples. The fruit of this hatred is seen in v.2 "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." This was prophetic. John MacArthur reports what happened to some of disciples according to Christian tradition:

"Peter, Andrew, and James the son of Alphaesus were all crucified; James the son of Zebedee was beheaded; as was Paul; Thomas was stabbed with spears; Mark was dragged to death through the streets of Alexandria; and James the half brother of Jesus was stoned by order of the Sanhedrin."¹

And this same hatred and or persecution happens to all followers of Jesus Christ to greater or lesser degrees regardless of when they live or where they live. **2 Timothy 3:12** "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted," We saw the reason for this last week. Why does the world hate Jesus and his followers *mainly*? J.C. Ryle sums it up best:

"What will it cost a man to be a true Christian? It will cost him his self-righteousness. He must cast away all pride and high thoughts, and conceit of his own goodness. He must be content to go to heaven as a poor sinner, saved only by free grace, and owing all to the merit and righteousness of another."

When that gospel is preached—Jesus being the only way, the only truth, and the only life—that inner voice of all human beings "Nobody tells me what to do"

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary John 12-21*, (Chicago, IL.: Moody Publishers, 2008), pg. 188

risers up in rebellion. And this rebellion turns into hatred and persecution against the church.

A peculiar remedy

I said that this is a peculiar part of Jesus' farewell discourse *because* the remedy that He gives for the world's hatred is peculiar.

Jesus does not help you by turning you into a super Christian. There are no such thing as super Christians. The Apostle Paul ministered in utter *weakness*. He prayed three times for his painful thorn to be removed, and the Lord answered him "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (**2 Corinthians 12:9**) Paul was often *afraid*. In **Acts 18:9**, "the Lord said to [him] one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you."² Paul even despaired. **2 Cor. 1:8** "For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself." Nowhere in these words of Jesus does He promise us help to overcome the world's hatred by changing us into super-Christians. He intends for us to be weak and needy for Him all the way to the end.

Jesus does not help you with His physical presence. He says in v.5 "But now I am going to him who sent me." This is a dominant theme throughout these verses. In v.4, 5, 7, and 10, Jesus reminds his disciples that He is leaving. Thus far the disciples have been shielded from much of the world's animosity because Jesus has bore it. But now He's leaving. He does not help you to overcome the world's hatred with His physical presence.

Jesus does not provide you with a command to overcome the world's hatred. In the very place, where Jesus tells you that the world will hate you, He doesn't give you a

² Paul also was taken to the point of

single command.³ There are no imperatives in this text. What does this tell us? That your ability to overcome the world will not come from your own strength. You did not come to Christ on your own strength and you will not stay in Christ on your own strength, and you cannot withstand the hatred and persecution of the world on your own strength. That's why this passage is peculiar. Jesus is saying 'I'm leaving. And when I leave, all hell is going to break loose. And you are completely powerless to oppose it or to overcome it.'

It is to your advantage that I go away

That is why v.7 is so surprising. Jesus says "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." How did the apostles overcome excommunication and persecution and death? Because Jesus gave them the Holy Spirit. And Jesus said "it is to your *advantage*."

Dear congregation, I hope you feel the weight of Jesus words. The worst problems that the disciples were yet to face were ahead of them. After Jesus was crucified for sinners, and raised, and ascended into heaven, they would face all the hatred of the world. And Jesus doesn't promise them physical protection, or power, or wealth. He promises them pain, and weakness, and poverty. But He says that He would give them the Holy Spirit of the Living God and that would be enough. And that is enough for you. What trials are you facing this week? The trial of losing friends? The trial of racking physical pain? The trial of uncertainties about your financial future, or your job, or your reputation? Where are you looking for answers? Jesus gives you the answer in this text. He have given you the Holy Spirit of the Living God. And He says this is the greatest advantage that you could have.

³ In fact, the only two commands He provides in the entirety of chapter sixteen are found in v.24 "Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full"; and in v.33 "But take heart; I have overcome the world."

The Big Idea...

Jesus provides for the greatest troubles you will face in this life by giving you the Holy Spirit

- ☆ The Spirit Convicts the World
- ☆ The Spirit Counsels Us in the Word
- ☆ The Spirit Comforts Us in Christ

The tender ministry of Jesus

Before we look at the Spirit's work in this passage, let's see how tenderly Jesus acts towards his disciples. He knows exactly what they are thinking at this point. "Jesus, why didn't you tell us *these things* before?" In fact, *these things* were a cause for great sorrow. **v.6** says "because I have said *these things* to you, sorrow has filled your heart." So He tells them why. Look at the end of **v.4** "I did not say *these things* to you from the beginning, because I was with you." Jesus knew perfectly well from the very beginning that his disciples would face incredible hardships, but He didn't tell them until they needed to know. No doubt you been in similar situations where you have bad news. And you have not told your loved ones until the proper time in order to spare them pain. That's what Jesus does here. And He does it again in **v.12** "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." What a tender Savior. He Sovereignly knows everything that will happen in your life. But He withholds those things from you *because* you simply cannot bear them now. If Jesus showed you the hardships that you would face in this life, you simply would not be able to bear up underneath them. The grace that you need for tomorrow only comes tomorrow. Jesus says in **Matthew 6:34** "Do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

This is the tender ministry of Jesus. He gives us the grace that we need for today.

And this tenderness of Jesus is seen in contrast with the self-centeredness of the disciples. He says in v.5 “But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’” Now Peter did ask Jesus where He was going in John 13:36.⁴ But his question was purely self-serving. D.A. Carson gives an illustration

“Imagine that a boy and his father have a fishing trip planned, but the father is unexpectedly called into an emergency meeting. And the boy says “Dad, where are you going?” But he doesn’t really care about the actual destination. He’s really asking “Why are you leaving me?”⁵

The disciples were completely self-absorbed with their own problems not realizing that Jesus was about to be crucified for them. They cared more about what was happening to them than what was going to happen to Jesus.

I was having my own pity party this week—worrying about all the things of tomorrow. I was at the gym and walked into the sauna, where I met a Hindu and a moral relativist. Both of these men were heading for a Christ-less eternity. And my problems seem selfishly small and insignificant. The Holy Spirit gave me the grace to share the hope of Jesus Christ with them. I hope that they will consider Christ. I hope they will believe. But I was filled with joy. Because Jesus reminded me where He went for me.

Dear congregation, Jesus was crucified for you. He solved your biggest problem—your sin. And consider how tenderly He reminds you of this. When you are orbiting around your own selfish ends, or are swallowed up in self-pity, or excessive sorrow, He simply asks “Don’t you remember *where* I went for you?”

But Jesus provides more even more grace in this passage.

⁴ Thomas asked something similarly in John 14:4-5

⁵ Adapted from D.A. Carson’s *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to Jesus*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), pg. 533

I. The Spirit Convicts the World

The mission

It was already the defined mission of the disciples that they would be the ones who would carry the message of Jesus to the world. After the resurrection, Jesus would tell them in **Acts 1:8** “you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

But with Jesus departing, their sorrow increasing, and the world so threatening, how would they accomplish their mission? Jesus says in v.7-11

7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

The Spirit's work

The disciples would be successful *because* it is the Holy Spirit that is the main witness of Jesus in the world. Jesus is saying: ‘Yes, you must be my witnesses. Yes you must proclaim the gospel. But it is the Helper who is making all of your witnessing, all of your proclaiming effective.’ And then He gives the three-fold work of the Spirit.

1) v.9—The Spirit will convict the world of sin, because they do not believe in me.

Nobody will ever come to Jesus Christ unless the Holy Spirit effectually convinces them of their sin. Paul says in **1 Corinthians 2:14** “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” Paul says in **2 Corinthians 4:4** “the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of

Christ,” This blindness cannot be overcome by *mere* words or by *mere* will. Many evangelicals today would say ‘I owe my faith to my own free will.’ But what Jesus is saying is that you owe your faith to the Holy Spirit. You would never believe unless the Holy Spirit opened your eyes to the glory of Jesus Christ.

2) *v.10—The Spirit will convict the world of righteousness, because I go to the Father*⁶

When Jesus preached, He declared that every good work that the world does is not *merely* insufficient, but it is evil. **John 7:7** “The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that *its works* are evil.” And now that Jesus has gone to the Father, the Holy Spirit continues to *convict* the world of its empty righteousness. Dear congregation, that *conviction* is the nagging sense that you often feel in your heart. “I’m a fraud. I’m so bad. If people knew what I was really like, nobody would accept me.” And so you try to compensate by working harder at your job, or by giving more to others, or a billion other protestant penance programs in order to ease your conscience. Only you find that none of them work. Nothing you can offer to God can ever make you acceptable to Him. That is what the Spirit is aiming at convincing you of. You have Christ or you have nothing. You have His righteousness imputed to by faith, or you have nothing. That’s what the Spirit convinces the world of, its need for the perfect righteousness of Christ.

3) *v.11—The Spirit will convict the world of its judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged*

When Christ was crucified for sinners, the ruler of this world was judged. **Hebrews 2:14** says when Jesus died, he destroyed “...the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.” When Satan was defeated, by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, it clear warning to planet earth that there is certainly a judgment for sin still coming. That’s what the Spirit convicts the

⁶ For a analysis of the differing views, see D.A. Carson’s *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to Jesus*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), pg. 534-539

world of in the preaching of the cross. The wages of sin is death. Christ died for sinners. He suffered a judgment from God for His people. And the only rescue from the coming judgment is to flee to Him for rescue. That's what the Spirit convinces the world of.

Summary

Let's summarize this section. Jesus is saying from v.7 that the gift of the Holy Spirit is so great because of these things that He does, that Jesus leaving them is seen as good. It is to our advantage, He says. The disciples saw this right away. On the day of Pentecost, the fruit of Jesus' ministry was seen by the 120 gathered.⁷ But by the end of the day, the fruit of the Holy Spirit's ministry was seen by the three thousand that came to believe the gospel.⁸

And the point is this: it is the Holy Spirit alone who is effectual in convincing the world of sin, and righteousness and judgment. And this should free us from a thousand anxieties. We are free to preach and proclaim and then rest in the Spirit doing the work. Our witness will not fail because it is the Spirit's role to make it effectual. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts." **Zechariah 4:6**

II. The Spirit Counsels Us in the Word

The Spirit will guide *you* into all truth

The context of v.13 is so important. "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." Many take Jesus' words out of their context and say things like "The Spirit will guide *me* into all truth." But we have to ask: who is Jesus speaking to? The apostles. So first we have to ask what do these words mean to the

⁷ Acts 1:15

⁸ Acts 2:41

apostles, and then we can ask what do these words mean to us. To miss this is to miss a far greater promise.

So what is Jesus getting at here? Consider the three things that Jesus promises the Holy Spirit will guide the apostles into.⁹

- 1) **The Holy Spirit would show them the truth about Jesus.** v.14 says that “He will take what is *mine* and declare it to you.”
- 2) **The Holy Spirit would show them the things that are to come.** Meaning future promises and prophecy.
- 3) **The Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance everything that Jesus said.** Jesus had already touched on this in **John 14:26** “But the Helper...will teach you all things and bring your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

Those three things...

- 1) **The truth about Jesus**
- 2) **The things that Jesus said**
- 3) **The things that are to come**

...are what the Holy Spirit guided the Apostles into. Now what do those three things establish? The New Testament. That’s why v.13 is far more precious than a general promise to all believers. Jesus was giving the apostles a promise that has secured the church for the last 20 centuries. This promise is what has established churches, and missionaries, and God-fearing governments, and what has comforted dying saints. This is the promise of the New Testament. So feel the weight of what Jesus is saying. ‘Apostles, I’m giving you the Holy Spirit, and He is going to equip you to teach all Christians for all ages. I’m giving you the Holy Spirit and He will guide you into *all the truth* that the church ever needs —namely the written word of God.

Is there then an application for us who are not apostles? In other words, is there a sense in which the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth. Yes. But it’s not by some private revelation apart from the word of God. The Holy Spirit guides

⁹ Much help in this section from Sinclair Ferguson’s sermon *Jesus: Glorified By the Spirit* found at <https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/Ferguson/2007.03.07.M%20Jesus%20Glorified%20by%20the%20Spirit%20-%20Dr.%20Sinclair%20B.%20Ferguson%20-%20fpc-030707.mp3> accessed on May 27th, 2017

us into all truth by opening to us the Scriptures. When we read and study the Scriptures—when we hear it taught and preached, we are being led by the Holy Spirit into all truth. Dear congregation, what a sad state we would be in if Jesus didn't provide for us this promise! Sinclair Ferguson says, because of this promise of Christ

“We are not walking around blindly, thinking ‘the only way I can live the Christian life is if direct revelations fall down from heaven into my life.’ How many of us would actually agree with one another if that happened? And how would we ever be able to say to each other, ‘it wasn't God who revealed that to you?’...¹⁰ The real question is: where has God revealed things to us by His Holy Spirit? And the answer is *in the truth about Jesus, in the things that Jesus said, and in the promises that Jesus gave*, and they are in the pages of the New Testament Scripture.”¹¹

Summary

Those are the first two reasons why Jesus said that it would be for our advantage that He would go away. 1) He would send the Holy Spirit to convict the world. 2) He would send the Holy Spirit to bring us the Scriptures. And the third reason that Jesus gives us is that...

III. The Spirit Comforts Us in Christ

He will glorify me

Look at v.14-15 “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.” If you hear teaching or preaching that

¹⁰ “The people that are most difficult to discuss things with in the Christian Church are people who begin sentences with “God has revealed this to me” There's no discussing after that.”

¹¹ Sinclair Ferguson's sermon: *Jesus: Glorified By the Spirit* found at <https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/Ferguson/2007.03.07.M%20Jesus%20Glorified%20by%20the%20Spirit%20-%20Dr.%20Sinclair%20B.%20Ferguson%20-%20fpc-030707.mp3> accessed on May 27th, 2017

doesn't glorify Christ, it is not teaching from the Holy Spirit. This is the Spirit's main job—to celebrate the person and work of Jesus Christ. Consider how v. 14-15 say the same thing twice: “He will take what is mine and declare it to you.” This repetition is not in vain. It's for emphasis. It's meant to grab our attention and ask, ‘Why is Jesus repeating Himself here?’ Because He wants to show us the preciousness of the Holy Spirit's work. Dear congregation, **the Holy Spirit brings Christ to you.** “He will take *what is mine* and *declare it to you.*”

What does the Holy Spirit take from Jesus and declare to you?

That “Christ Jesus has made you his own” (**Phil. 3:12**)

That “Jesus is the propitiation for your sins” (**1 John 2:2**)

That through Jesus you are freed “from everything that you could not be free by the law” (**Acts 13:39**)

That in Jesus you would “become the righteousness of God” (**2 Cor. 5:21**)

That Jesus ever “lives to make intercession for” you (**Heb. 7:25**)

That even when “you are faithless, he remains faithful for he cannot deny himself” (**2 Timothy 2:12-13**)

That Jesus will return one day and will “be marveled at among all who have believed.” (**2 Thess. 1:10**)

That Jesus is your everlasting portion, your crown, your joy, that you will have no more need for light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be your light, and you will reign with Him for ever and ever. (**Rev. 22:5**)

In other words, the Holy Spirit is given to you *mainly* so that you would enjoy Jesus Christ.

Every time you have ever experienced a greater admiration for Jesus—for His love and forgiveness—for the truth of His word—for the comfort of His promises, it is the Holy Spirit who is actively working in you. He is displaying

Christ to you soul. And this is what you will need when you face the hatred and persecution of the world. This is what the apostles needed. More of Jesus. That's why Jesus said "it is to your advantage that I go away." Because when the Holy Spirit came, He ever lives to enrich us with the very riches of Christ in order that glory of Jesus might be seen in all things.

Application

Our Doctrine: Jesus provides for the greatest troubles you will face in this life by giving you the Holy Spirit

In our passage, Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would come to us and perform three important things. 1) He would convict the world. 2) He would guide the apostles into all truth. 3) He would glorify Christ.

The world is subject to the Holy Spirit.

The Scriptures are created by the Holy Spirit.

Christ is enjoyed by the Holy Spirit.

Dear congregation, the Holy Spirit has provided for your greatest needs. You are a Christian solely because of the Holy Spirit. You understand the truth of Scripture solely because of the Holy Spirit. When you enjoy Christ, when He is precious to your soul, it is the Holy Spirit that accomplishes that. What did you face this week that the Holy Spirit wasn't the answer for? If the Holy Spirit supports you against the hatred and persecution of the world, certainly He is abundantly able to help you in your daily trials. The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal "it." Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as "He" or "Him" or "His" 12x in this passage. The Spirit not some abstract power source. It wouldn't be to our advantage to have a non-personal power come instead of the Personal Christ. The Holy Spirit is just as much of a Person as the Divine Father, and the Divine Son. And He is our the ever-present help in time of need.

Our Duty: ?

There is no duty in this passage. Jesus doesn't give the apostles one command in this portion of Scripture. But doesn't that tell us something very important? Jesus doesn't leave our success in our own hands. Jesus is not depending on us to be able to overcome the world on our own. In fact, that is why **John 16:1** makes so much sense. Jesus said "I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away." And then what does Jesus do? He lists all the things that He accomplished and all the things the Holy Spirit will accomplish. Our not falling away doesn't depend upon us *ultimately*. It's true. We must believe. We must trust in Christ. "without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." (Hebrews 11:6). But what is faith? Faith is the evidence of our helplessness. Faith is saying, "Jesus I can't do this, but you can. Holy Spirit I have no strength, but you have all strength." Calvin said that "The trust then which we put in God, is an evidence of our helplessness."¹²

There are no commands in the passage because Jesus wants us to know as Moses said "The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent." (**Exodus 14:14**)

Our Delight: Jesus died to give us the Holy Spirit

It's so easy to overlook the ministry and importance of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Jesus did not. He said "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." (**John 16:7**) That connection between Jesus leaving and going to the cross and the Spirit coming is a very important connection. It's a causal connection. Turn with me to **Galatians 3**. We are going to be looking at v. 13-14. And what we are going to see here is the connection between Jesus

¹² John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries Vol. XXII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks 2009), pg. 68

being crucified and the Spirit coming. Paul shows us relationship between Christ's death and the giving of the Holy Spirit. v.13-14

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us —for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—**so that** in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, [**what is the blessing of Abraham?**] *so that* we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

Christ became a curse on the cross, so that we might receive the Holy Spirit through faith. In other words, Jesus died to give us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a second prize in the gospel. Jesus died so that you would gain God the Holy Spirit.

How do you experience grace in this life?

How do you experience love?

Forgiveness?

Peace?

Comfort?

Hope?

These are not abstractions. These are not impersonal detachments that float through the air from God to you. No. These things—grace, love, forgiveness, peace, comfort, and hope—are the manifestation of the Holy Spirit Himself. When you experience these things, it is because the Holy Spirit is filling you with Himself. You experience grace because the Holy Spirit is more active in you. You experience love because the Holy Spirit is softening your heart. You can forgive others because the Holy Spirit is granting you the ability to do so. All these things that God requires of us but we are helpless in ourselves to perform, the Holy Spirit fills us with Himself in order that we may commune with Him. That's why Jesus died. It was to our advantage that He went away, so that the Helper would come to all of us through faith.

