

John 16:1-15
(Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ephesians 3:14-21)
“When the Spirit Comes”

Introduction

Jesus has told his disciples that he is leaving them and that where he is going they cannot yet follow. They are confused and frightened. And so he speaks words of comfort and assurance to them, offering them hope and telling them that it is actually for their good that he is going away: “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” (16:7). Jesus then describes the essence of the Spirit’s ministry – a ministry both to the world-at-large, and to the church.

Body

1. The Spirit’s ministry to the world (16:8-11):

- He will convict the world “concerning sin, because they do not believe in me” (16:9):

The essence of sin will no longer be breaking God’s law, but refusing God’s grace by rejecting the Savior.

- He will convict the world “concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and they will see me no longer” (16:10):

The righteousness now required will no longer be my failed attempts to keep God’s law, but the righteousness of the One who kept the law perfectly, offered his perfect life in place of my broken life, and has now been received back into the Father’s presence.

- He will convict the world “concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged” (16:11):

Not only was my sin judged and dealt with forever on the cross, but “the ruler of this world” was condemned and his power broken on the cross. The apostle Paul puts it this way: “And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him” [that is, in Christ] (Colossians 2:13-15).

2. The Spirit's ministry to the church (16:12-15):

- He will guide us into all the truth.

It is only the Spirit of God who can enable us to understand the things of God. Again we hear the wisdom given to the apostle Paul, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God" (1 Corinthians 2:12).

- He will declare to us the things that are to come.

It is also by the Spirit that the prophets and apostles have told us of the things to come, assuring us of God's final victory over everything that would separate us from his love. Eugene Peterson has made the delightful observation in his book on Revelation entitled *Reversed Thunder*, that when at the end of history God finally deals decisively with the ruler of this world, there is no great, epic battle. Satan has no power against God. His end is described in a verse or two: After Satan has gathered his forces and started to attack, we read, "but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, and the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:9-10). Peterson says that if you went out for popcorn, you missed the whole thing! We live in hope, because we know the end of the story, and it is all about God's decisive victory in the destruction of his enemies and final salvation of his people.

- He will glorify Jesus.

Finally, just as Jesus said that he had come to glorify the Father, so too the Spirit glorifies Jesus in the church as a foretaste of the coming when "at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow ... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10).

Conclusion

Only God's Spirit can bring the world face-to-face with its sin in such a way that it recognizes the necessity of the gospel of Christ.

Only God's Spirit can bring the church face-to-face with God's truth in such a way that it recognizes the glory of the gospel of Christ.

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