

The World Convicted by the Holy Spirit

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[0 : 00] Before that preaching, please turn to the book of John, chapter 16. Jesus is teaching his disciples shortly before his arrest and death.

He's just told them that the world would hate them as it hated Jesus first. And he continues in verse 5 to speak of the Holy Spirit. That's where I'll start. John 16, verses 5 through to 11.

This is the word of God. Now I am going to him who sent me. Yet none of you asks me, where are you going? Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief.

But I tell you the truth, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the counselor will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.

In regard to sin, because men do not believe in me. In regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer. And in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

[1 : 14] Amen. Let's hear the preaching of God's word. The Holy Spirit is often the forgotten and overlooked member of the Trinity.

But he is as much God as the Father is God and the Son is God. The Holy Spirit is no impersonal power or force. But he is as much a person as the Father is a person and the Son is a person.

And he shares the one divine nature with the Father and the Son. Therefore, every divine attribute that the Father and Son have, the Holy Spirit has.

And on the night of Jesus' arrest, alone with his 12 disciples, our Lord Jesus told them that when he returned to the Father, he would send the Holy Spirit to them.

Now, in the Greek, the Holy Spirit is here called the paraclete. Our version translates it counselor. Others call it the comforter, the helper.

[2 : 20] It literally means one called alongside. One called alongside of his people to help them in so many ways.

But in our text, it's not the Holy Spirit's work of helping God's people that is spoken of, but rather the Holy Spirit's work in the unbelieving world of lost people.

When he comes, verse 8, Jesus says, he will convict the world of guilt. So this would be very encouraging to these disciples whom Jesus has trained for three years to be fishers of men with the gospel net.

Because as Jesus is now about to return to his Father in heaven, his mission is to be carried on by these men that he has been training. And so Jesus is saying, you'll not be left alone when I return to the Father.

For when I go, I will send the Holy Spirit to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin, in regard to righteousness, and in regard to judgment.

[3 : 35] So as you go out witnessing and preaching the gospel, be encouraged because the Holy Spirit goes with you to convict the world of its guilt before God.

And so the work of the Holy Spirit here is the work of a prosecuting attorney in a court of law. The Holy Spirit is there to bring evidence to light, to prove sinners as being in the wrong, as being guilty before God and deserving of punishment.

Now on the face of it, that might sound like an unkind ministry of the Holy Spirit. But in fact, it's as kind as the Father sending his Son to be judged on the cross in the place of sinners.

So it is a kindness that Jesus would send the Spirit to convict the world of its guilt. Because until you're convicted of being a guilty sinner, you'll not seek pardon in the only Savior, Jesus Christ.

Until you're convicted of the judgment that's coming for you, you won't seek rescue from the coming wrath. So why? Why is the Holy Spirit's work as prosecutor of the world so necessary?

[4 : 57] Well, because the world is not convinced of its sin. It is not convinced of Christ's righteousness and of the judgment that is coming for them.

Rather, the world regarded Jesus as the sinner and themselves as the righteous ones. And they're about to bring judgment upon Jesus by nailing Him to the cross as a guilty criminal.

They had it all wrong. And the world still has it all wrong in regard to sin and Christ's righteousness and the coming judgment.

So the world needs to be convicted of its guilt before God. Because of their complacency, they just don't care about sin, righteousness, and judgment.

They have no appetite for such things. And when they hear them, they say, boring, boring. That might be your thing, but it's not my thing.

[6 : 00] Yawn before the gospel. The world needs to be convicted by the spirit of its guilt because of the distractions of the world. A thousand lesser things.

A thousand earthly desires. I've got a family to feed. I've got a payment to make. I've got all these things. And so the God of this age has blinded the minds of the people in the world so that they do not see their greatest problem.

The Holy Spirit needs to convict the world because of their internal defense lawyer. Ever so ready to object to any evidence that is brought to light that would convict them of guilt.

To excuse self. To justify themselves. To rationalize their guilt away. To claim innocence. And you and I, bumping into that in the world, cannot penetrate those powerful defenses, but the Holy Spirit can.

And does. And has in every one of us who have come to Christ. That's why this is good news for sinners. The Holy Spirit has come to do that work of conviction that we so need.

[7 : 17] So this is not only encouraging for us who care about our lost loved ones and neighbors, but it's also good news for any here who still continue in unbelief, living for yourself, rejecting Jesus.

And so for the sake of your eternal soul, would you consider this morning these three things? And we'll pray for the Holy Spirit to convict you of them that you might fly at once to Jesus Christ before it's forever too late.

According to the loving Lord Jesus, the first thing that he sends the Holy Spirit to convict the world of is their sin. Because they do not believe in me.

Verse 9. Now I'm sure that if we went to the mall and took a survey of all the passers-by of one question, just ask this one question, what are the worst sins in the world today?

Well, we would hear an earful of horrid things that people do to other people. We'd hear about murder, torture, rape, robbery, adultery, child abuse, human trafficking, and the like.

[8 : 32] Mostly things that, of course, they had never done, but those bad people out there have done. And that too is part of that inner defense lawyer that sees so clearly the evils of others and overlooks our own guilt and sin.

Psalms 36 too says that in their own eyes, they flatter themselves too much to detect or hate their sin. How good we are at denying our sin and seeing everyone else's clearly.

But this sin that Jesus says that the Holy Spirit has come from heaven particularly takes aim at convicting the world of its guilt, it's not something that they've even done.

It's rather something they've not done. They have not believed in me. That's their great sin. I think you could survey a thousand people and that sin would not be mentioned once.

And yet Jesus says that more than any sin is the thing that proves the world guilty before God. They have not believed in me. They will not come to me that they might have life.

[9 : 47] They go everywhere else looking for life, but they won't come to me to find real life. Well, most in the world are unaware then of the seriousness of this sin of not believing on Jesus.

They hardly, if ever, think of it. And I would ask you, dear lost person, do you know the exceeding sinfulness of not believing on Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

The Holy Spirit has come to convict you of that very sin and how offensive it is to God. Consider, we all like sheep have gone astray.

That means that we have turned our backs to God. We have thumbed His authority. And we've chosen to go our way. We said, I'll do life my way, not your way.

And instead of sending us all to hell at once, He sent His one and only Son to suffer in the place of sinners. It wasn't an angel that He sent.

[10:52] It was the one that angels worship and adore. It was the Father's pure delight, the source of His eternal pleasure. He sent Him. And this Jesus comes to the rebellious world with His hands full of salvation blessings.

The very things we need. Forgiveness of all our sins. He comes with that in His hands to offer.

Peace with God. Fellowship with God. Adoption into His family.

Eternal life. An inheritance in the new heavens, in the new earth. The home of righteousness. He's got it all in His hands.

And we took those hands and we nailed them to the tree. God so loved this world's sunken sin that He sent Him to the hellish cross to suffer and die for sin.

To bear the full weight of God's infinite wrath for sin. To feel the undoing of Himself as the Father forsook Him.

[11:57] Treating Him as our sins deserve. Damning Him as hell came to Calvary that day. And then once He was taken down and put in a grave, three days later, the Father raised His Son from the dead.

And He's been sending His messengers into the world to urge sinners to make peace with Him by repudiating our rejection of Jesus. and believing on Him, embracing Him, believing and receiving Him as Lord and Savior.

All of that only to see sinners say, no thanks. Not going to believe. Yawn.

Neglecting His Son. Refusing to trust Him with their lives. Do you know how offensive that is to God the Father? He's given testimony about His Son.

You know what He says about His Son? He says, you need my Son. You need my Son more than anything else that you need. He's your greatest need for this life and for eternity.

[13:08] There's no real life without Him. And your refusal to come to Him and trust and receive Him shows that you disagree with God. He's not my greatest need, you say.

I'm getting along fine without Him, actually. That's to call God a liar. He says in 1 John 5, 10-12, John says, anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar.

Because God, because He has not believed the testimony God has given about His Son. And this is the testimony God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son.

He who has the Son has life. He who has not the Son of God. He doesn't have life. It's a walking death, but it is not life. And if you haven't trusted in the Savior, you're saying, no, you're wrong, God. I do have life. I'm doing fine without your Son. Is any other sin so serious as that? So arrogant, so ungrateful, so foolish and wicked?

[14:17] It's a mother sin, you see. Calvin says, it's at the bottom of all sin, this unbelief, calling God a liar. And it's a great damning sin because this sin keeps the sinner from the only Savior to save him from his unbelief and all his other sins.

If he won't believe in Jesus, he has no Savior. It is a damning sin. For whoever believes on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

And whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son, will not see life because God's wrath remains on Him.

Yes, that's right. God's wrath remains on Him just for ignoring the Lord Jesus, just for not believing on Him to save you.

In fact, do you know that the greatest punishment in hell is not for all those sins that the world puts on their top ten list of the worst sins in the world? No, the greatest punishment in hell according to the loving Jesus is reserved for those who had Christ offered to them in the gospel and yet did not believe on Him for life.

[15:41] Did not come to Him. Jesus says, I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you. You've had greater privileges. You've had me come and offer myself to you in the gospel and you've not believed.

Some of you ladies were here three weeks ago on Friday evening to hear of five female portraits of a worthy walk and I had the privilege of listening to them. And you heard of Elizabeth Prentice, the preacher's kid at age 19 who was under intense conviction of her sin and guilt.

And looking back on that time, she later wrote, the sin that distressed me the most was the rejection of the Savior. Precisely the sin that the Holy Spirit has come into the world to convict the world of.

You don't believe on me. You've not received me. You're rejecting me. I beg you to not belittle that sin any longer.

It's a sin you daily commit as long as you do not come to Jesus for life. Well, that's the first thing that the Spirit has come to convince the world of its guilt.

[17:04] It's unbelief in Jesus. But secondly, verse 10 says the Holy Spirit convicts the world of guilt in regard to righteousness. Jesus says, because I'm going to the Father where you will see me no longer.

Now this is clearly speaking of Christ's righteousness. The Spirit has come to convince the world that Jesus is righteous. Well, what is the world's opinion of Jesus?

Well, let me read you some of their quotes from John 9, 24. We know this man is a sinner. Matthew 27, 63. He's a deceiver, deceiving the people.

Mark 3, 22. He's demon possessed. He's in league with Beelzebub, the prince of demons by which he casts out demons. They tried him in their court and they concluded that he was guilty of what? Blaspheming God. Matthew 26, 65. They told Pilate, according to our law, he ought to die. He deserves to die. He's fomenting a revolt against Caesar.

[18:09] That's a criminal offense. Isaiah 53, 4 gives us the world's view of Jesus as he's there on the cross between two criminals. We considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

Oh yes, the world did not view Jesus as righteous. Not at all. They considered him cursed by God and rightly so.

He's getting what he deserves as an unrighteous evildoer. So the world needs to be convicted that they got it dreadfully wrong about the Savior and his righteousness.

So what is the evidence that the Holy Spirit produces to convict the world of Christ's righteousness? Jesus tells us, I'm going to the Father where you will see me no longer.

It's clearly a reference to Christ's resurrection and ascension and exaltation at the right hand of the Father where they will see him no more here on earth.

[19:22] Having lived a sinless, righteous life of perfect obedience, Paul says in Philippians 2, 8, and 9, he was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And therefore, the Father was so pleased with the obedience of his Son that he raised him not only from the dead, but all the way to heaven and seated him in the highest place and gave him the highest name there on his own throne in heaven.

And he said to him, sit here at my right hand until I make all your enemies as a footstool for your feet. Hebrews 1, 3, after he had provided purification for sin on the cross, he sat down, where?

At the right hand of the majesty in heaven. Ephesians 1, 20, God raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.

You see, the world got it all wrong about Jesus. And it's his presence in heaven where Jesus went that is the proof positive of his perfect righteousness.

Matthew Henry says, the holy God would never set a deceiver at his right hand. An unholy, unrighteous man would not be placed into the most holy place with his father in the holy dwelling place of heaven.

[20:50] If he's a blaspheming sinner that the world judged him to be, he wouldn't be admitted into heaven where the angels cry, holy, holy, holy.

The son was, the son that the world rejected as unrighteous was welcomed home to heaven by his father as the righteous one. The righteous one.

And apart from him, there is none righteous, you see. What looked like an unrighteous criminal hanging between two other criminals was in fact, according to 1 Peter 3, 18, the righteous one dying for the unrighteous that he might bring us to God.

In fact, as he was stricken, smitten, and afflicted, it was because he was bearing our sins. He was wounded for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities, and the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his stripes we are healed. It was our sins that God laid upon him. And it's that that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of, that Jesus is righteous and not the wicked man you crucified him to be.

[22:07] And so many references throughout the scriptures, all inspired by who? By the Holy Spirit. It's his prosecutorial work to prove that the world was in the wrong concerning the righteousness of this man, Jesus of Nazareth.

Over and over, the Holy Spirit bears witness in scripture that Jesus is the righteous one. 1 John 2, 1. That is the Holy Spirit's convicting the world of the righteousness of Jesus, whom they rejected as evil.

And so the Holy Spirit keeps prosecuting the world as he then empowers Peter to stand in Jerusalem and charge its inhabitants in Acts chapter 3, verses 14 and 15.

You disown the holy and righteous one and ask that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. Do you hear the Holy Spirit as the prosecuting attorney, you see, showing them they were wrong about Jesus?

He's the righteous one. In Acts 7, Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit as prosecutor, says to the Jewish high court of Sanhedrin, your fathers killed those who predicted the coming of the righteous one.

[23 : 33] And now you have betrayed and murdered him. Who? The righteous one. How wrong the world got it. And is now exposed for their guilt for saying, we're the righteous one, Jesus is the sinner.

The prosecuting Holy Spirit proves, no, you are the sinful ones and he is the righteous one. Well, in the third place, we come to verse 11. There's one more thing mentioned by Jesus that the Holy Spirit will convict the world of and that is judgment because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

He's come to convict the world of judgment. The Bible teaches that it's appointed unto man once to die and then the judgment.

There will be a judgment immediately upon the death of every man, woman, boy or girl and they will be sent either to heaven or to hell. But there will be another judgment at the end of the ages when Jesus comes back and calls all who have ever lived before him and will separate them, some on the right, some on the left.

The Bible says, Jesus says in Matthew 25, the unrighteous will go away to eternal punishments but the righteous to eternal life.

[24 : 57] The world doesn't think a lot about the coming judgment. Why is that? Well, could it be that they're not ready for the coming judgment?

Why is it not a favorite subject for them? Maybe because of their sinful unbelief. They've never come to Christ to save them. And because of their own lack of righteousness which only Jesus has. And so they know that there is condemnation waiting for them at the judgment seat of Christ. But the evidence that makes the judgment of the world inescapable is because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

That's what Jesus says. That's the ace in the Holy Spirit's prosecutorial work. The prince of this world already stands condemned.

Twice, Jesus refers to the devil as the prince of this world. and the Holy Spirit produces multiple texts proving the fact that the prince of this world has already been judged at Calvary's middle cross and been found wanting.

[26 : 11] He now stands condemned awaiting his final doom. 1 John 3.8 The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. And as Jesus comes to Jerusalem in that final week just days before his crucifixion he says in John 12.31 now is the time for judgment on this world.

Now the prince of this world will be driven out. There on the cross as Hebrews 2.14 and 15 says that by death Christ destroyed him who holds the power of death.

That is the devil. Colossians 2.15 Jesus having disarmed the powers of darkness he put them to an open shame triumphing over them by his cross.

This is that long expected seed of the woman who was to come and crush the head of the serpent and he did it at Calvary's cross. And this the Holy Spirit the author of all these scriptures picks up and produces as evidence in the courtroom to convince the world of judgment that is coming because the prince of the world has already been judged.

He's putting the unbelieving world on notice. He's saying this listen up unbelieving world you who are under the control of the evil one Satan your ringleader and prince has been judged and found wanting.

[27 : 41] He's already been condemned and is only awaiting the carrying out of his sentence at Christ's return when that deceiver will be thrown into the lake of burning sulfur and be tormented day and night forever and ever Revelation 20.10 and listen unbelieving world if your leader is already judged and condemned what hope do you have of escaping the same judgment?

Since you've sided with him you've joined his rebellion against God and his Christ you still refuse to repent and believe on him. Your prince could not save himself and neither will he be able to save

you.

Just like him you too are condemned already if you've not believed on Jesus. John 3.18 Whoever believes in him God's son is not condemned but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he's not believed in the name of God's one and only son.

Has the Holy Spirit convicted you this morning of your coming judgment outside of Jesus Christ? If so that's no small mercy. Most in the world are going on today not thinking about their sin Christ's righteousness and the judgment that's coming for them.

How kind for him to send the Spirit with his word and to wake you up to reality before it's forever too late. He's warning you he's urging you to flee to Christ the righteous one who alone can rescue you from the coming wrath.

[29 : 29] Getting the truth right about your sin and Christ's righteousness is absolutely critical to your salvation because it's the righteousness of Jesus that you need to get into heaven and it is your sin and unbelief that is dragging you into hell.

You need to know these things you see and it's your claim to righteousness. It's the claim that I am righteous enough I am good enough I'm not like him and her and I don't do those kinds of things. That keeps you from going to Christ that you might be saved to find real righteousness in Jesus. But you know something?

all your righteousness outside of Jesus Christ it's just in your head. It's just imaginary. Isaiah calls it filthy rags in God's sight.

Oh you think those good works of yours your religion it's all so wonderful. Augustine called them splendid sins if you're outside of Jesus. You're not doing what you're doing as unto the Lord and faith in him and seeking his glory so the spirit is saying drop your claim to being righteous.

[30 : 44] I've presented enough evidence to prove you to be in the wrong before God he says. Confess yourself a sinner needing mercy. You see because when you finally quit hanging on to your way and your righteousness and you come with nothing in your hands with nothing good to say for yourself but God be merciful to me a sinner for Jesus' sake that's faith that's looking away from self to the one who is righteous and by crying out for God to save you because of Jesus and what he's done for sinners you see that's the faith that lays hold and receives Christ and all those blessings that he has in his hands for anyone who comes and believes on him.

And when you do that when you come to Jesus and confess that you're unrighteous you are the sinner and he's the righteous one and you're trusting in his obedience and blood there's this wonderful exchange that takes place.

All of your sins are put on to Christ not in part but the whole and they're forgiven and remembered no more because he was punished for them.

And all his righteousness is put to your account. You see why it's important that you understand I'm the sinner and I need a Savior who's righteous that can take my sins and pay the penalty on the cross and then I need his righteousness to get me into heaven.

His blood to keep me out of hell. His righteousness to get me into heaven. That's what you need to enter heaven. And not patched up man's righteousness will ever pass the muster and so the holy God if your trust is in Christ he'll look on you as in Christ and see his righteousness and say welcome home child.

[32 : 45] Welcome home. There's therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Why not? Because he was condemned that we might never be. Is that your trust? Oh, be encouraged.

If it's not come to him today. This is why the Holy Spirit is convicting you to get you to stop running from Christ and to turn and to run into his open arms of mercy for he's ready to receive any who come to him.

Indeed he says I will turn none away. But if you don't come to Christ you've judged yourself to be unworthy of eternal life and that judgment will hold firm in the day of judgment.

There'll be no defense lawyer there for you and you yourself will be proved guilty and be silenced before the evidence. Condemned by your own unbelief your own refusal to come to Christ for life. But why? Why when he's so ready and willing to receive you right now right here right where you are ask him to save you?

[33 : 59] You know we have a wonderful fulfillment of these words in Acts chapter 2. The day of Pentecost just 10 days after Jesus the resurrected Christ has been ascended into heaven to go to be with the Father and they see him no more.

10 days later during the feast of Pentecost Jesus having been exalted to the Father's right hand receives from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and pours out the Spirit upon his church. And Peter stands up and preaches to Jerusalem sinners just some 50 days earlier had murdered their Messiah. They had it all wrong about their sin and Christ's righteousness and the coming judgment.

they judged Jesus as being unrighteous and them as being righteous. And Peter stands and says no it's your sin.

You with the help of wicked men put him to death by nailing him to the cross convicting them of their sin of unbelief.

[35 : 10] And what of the righteousness of Christ? he was a man approved by God among you. God's stamp of approval was on him.

And you put him to death but God raised him from the dead. God's telling you how righteous his son he has not let his holy one see decay.

His righteous holy one. And he not only raised Jesus to life but exalted him to his right hand. Clearly the father's welcome in heaven proves the righteousness of Jesus.

And what the father said to the son proves that the day of judgment is coming. Because he said sit here at my right hand till I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

And it wasn't just Peter's words that day was it? The Holy Spirit had been poured out as the prosecuting attorney and there in that multitude listening to Peter preaching the gospel of the perfect life the atoning death and resurrection and exaltation of Jesus and coming judgment the Spirit of God was going forth as the prosecuting attorney and here and there throughout the crowd it was as a sword pierced their hearts.

[36 : 38] His final thrust was therefore let all Israel be assured of this God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ Messiah and with that the Holy Spirit thrust them through with conviction for they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles brothers what must we do they're beside themselves they see their sin they see their guilt of not accepting and believing on Jesus they see that they had it all wrong that Jesus is the righteous one seated at the Father's right hand pouring out his spirit they see that judgment is not going to go well for them what should we do can I just push pause and say this that conviction is not conversion these folks were convicted they were not converted yet they were asking what must we do to be saved but conviction is not conversion maybe you're convicted this morning about your sin and judgment to come that is not salvation that's enough to make you ask what should

I do and the answer is you need to repudiate this idea of your own righteousness own the conviction that you are guilty and come and throw yourself upon the mercy of God in Christ not everyone did that day you know you can harden your heart against conviction some of you have done it week after week you come and you're convicted of sin you go out and here you are you're still lost you're still outside of Christ what does that mean that means that conviction is not conversion you can stifle your conscience you can suppress the truth in unrighteousness you can try to forget these things and just immerse yourself in the world and whatever you've got to do today and tomorrow and these things become forgotten maybe you're like Governor Felix and Paul came and preached faith in Christ to him his prisoner Paul he'd have him come and Paul would preach faith in Christ and discourse about righteousness self-control and the judgment to come and Felix would tremble with fear he was convicted and he said that's enough for now

I'll call I'll call for you in a more convenient time do you know we never read of Governor Felix having repented and trusted in Christ he'd rather let Paul in prison two more years to please the Jews do you know that this this morning could be the closest you ever come to Jesus that you may never be more convicted about your need for Jesus and his willingness to say than you are right now so seek the Lord while he may be found and call on him while he's near he's near he's always near in the preaching of his word and if his spirit has convicted you don't stop there that is no resting place that's that's to put the burr in the saddle to say this is no place to rest sinner you need a savior get to him and not everyone in the crowd that day that was convicted went to Christ and believed on him but three thousand of them did and may you be one who does the same running to Christ and receiving his free and full salvation pastor Colin and I would be more than happy to talk with any of you about your need for the savior and how he perfectly meets the sinner's need what more could you want in a savior than what is found in our Jesus let's pray our father we're we're often humbled by the fact that you did not spare your own son but sent him to the hellish cross that

we might be saved and we're not often as awestruck that Lord Jesus you you sent your spirit to come and convict us of how we were believing the lies of the enemy how we were ignoring the only savior sinners and how we had it all wrong about what real life is and how it's going to go at the judgment so we thank you

Lord Jesus for your crowning gift of resurrection and pouring out your spirit thank you that many here have been convicted and not stopped there but have run to Christ and found him to be a willing and ready savior may others even here this day call on his name and be saved we ask in Jesus name amen come on his unört so and stop and get and