Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Holy Spirit Convicts the World, Part 2
Scripture: John 16:8-11
Code: 1559

The Holy Spirit Convicts the Word, Part 2

John 16 beginning in verse 1. "These things have I spoken unto you that you should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues. Yea, the time commeth that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you because they have not known the Father nor Me but these things have I told you that when the time shall come ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning because I was with you but now I go My way to Him that sent Me and none of you asketh Me where goest Thou, but because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart I will send Him unto you. And when He is come He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. Of sin because they believe not on Me, of righteousness because I go to My Father and ye see Me no more, of judgment because the prince of this world is judged." May God bless this reading to our hearts.

Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

Father, as we come to Your Word now and to study it, we just praise Your name that Jesus Christ laid His cross down to cross the span between God and man. We thank You that because of that old rugged cross we can walk into the arms of a loving God who can forgive us on the merits of the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

Lord, as we look at the Word now, may we treat it with reverence.

May we hold onto it with love and affection. May every word come to us like honey from the very throne of heaven. May we realize the privilege that is ours to have this precious truth. May we not be distracted but may we study it with diligence. May we hear the Spirit of God teaching us, convicting us, moving in our lives. May this be a time of rich blessing. We thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.

Turn in your Bibles to the sixteenth chapter of the gospel of John. We come to what is really part 2 of a message entitled "The Holy Spirit convicts the world." John's purpose in his book, which is the fourth book of the New Testament, John's purpose is to present Jesus Christ to the world. And John is very concerned that we see who He really is, that we understand that Jesus Christ is in fact a man,

but more than that He is God the very God of the universe come to earth in a human form. That is who Christ is. And that is what John seeks to show on every page of his entire gospel. And as we come to chapter 16, we again see Jesus Christ, He is the main character in every chapter in all of His glory in all of His magnificence and all of His godliness and in all of His humanness at the same time. And as we approach chapter 16 we are reminded that we are on the special occasion that Jesus is spending with His eleven disciples. It is the night before His crucifixion.

Since chapter 13 He has been talking to them on that night.

All through 13 He showed them His love. Through chapter 14 He gave them multiple promises and into chapter 15. And then through chapter 15 and the first part of chapter 16, He continues to speak with them, dealing with some issues that they need to understand. So it's His last will and testament, as it were, to the eleven disciples, the twelfth being Judas has already been sent out to perpetrate his betrayal of Christ.

Now in chapter 14 and 15 we've studied in past months, that Jesus gave the disciples...and this is very important...a certain number of very marvelous promises. He told them some fantastic things that were belonging to them because He was going to go away. They, of course, when he...when they heard He was going were very sorrowful. And they were very, very shaken. They were afraid. They didn't see any point in it. And Jesus then turns to comfort them by giving them not only the proof of His love but promise after promise after promise that would be theirs when He went away so that they would understand that it was even better that He go then all these promises would belong to them. And the culmination of all of the promises was the promise that I'm going to send My Holy Spirit to live within you.

Now there are three persons in the trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. They are each distinct and yet they are all one and the same. And you're not supposed to understand that, and neither am I. That's the mystery of God...that's what set God...sets God apart from man. And so Christ says I'm going to send back to you My Spirit who is God, the same as I am. And He will dwell in you and He will...remember how we saw this?...He will activate all the promises within you. And so He's giving them these promises and the capstone of the whole shot is that the Holy Spirit Himself will come, God will live within them, in their bodies. And that's true of every Christian, He lives within me, He lives within those of you who love Christ, doesn't He? It's a fantastic promise come true. And so He gave them all of these promises culminating in the promise of the Holy Spirit who makes possible every other promise.

But then having given them the promises He also gave them something else, and that we saw in chapter 15, He warned them.

He warned them that in spite of all of the promises, in spite of all of the positives, they could be sure of one thing, the world was going to hate them and the world was going to do everything it could to kill them, to persecute them. And so He says here are all the promises, but be aware of this, Gentlemen, if you really live for Me, if you really love Me, if you really name My name, if you're really one of My own, you're going to get persecution because you're going to be set in direct opposition against the world. That's basically then what He's been saying.

Now I want to show you a very beautiful way that these things relate. In fact, the promises have a direct relationship to the warning. And I'll show you why and it's very obvious. In the first place Jesus says to them the world will hate you. But then He also promised them I will love you. And we'll see as we go through these that every place that Jesus warned them He also gave them a corresponding promise to overcome the problem. He said to them, for example, the world will be your enemy, but He also said to them, I will be...what?...your friend. He said to them the world will persecute you, abuse you and kill you but I will supply all your needs and answer all your prayers. He said the world will give you trouble and anxiety but I will give you My peace. He said the world will bring you sadness and sorrow and heartbreak but I will put within you My joy. He said the world will try to kill you and the world will succeed but I will give you eternal life. He said the world will have Satan's power set against you but I will give you power to do greater things than even I did. And most of all, He said, I will give you My Holy Spirit, He will live you...He will live within you and He will empower you and activate all these promises so that you will be powerful and you will be effective in not only living in the world but in overcoming the world. And He said to them in chapter 16 verse 33, "In the world you shall have tribulation but be of good cheer...what?...I have overcome the world."

And so, He gave them all of the promises energized by the Holy Spirit to carry them through all of the warning and the hostility of the world. And when Jesus left, they were so well equipped they could face the whole world with all the ingredients necessary to come out conquerors, even though the world would hate them.

So then what have we seen in the last few weeks? We've seen that Jesus presents to them promises and a hostile world...a rebellious Godhating, Christhating, Christianhating world that they have to face. Now as we come to chapter 16 verses 1 to 11 He basically repeats the same warning, reviews the same promise and carries it a step further and that's what we're going to see this morning. We saw the first part last week.

Now in verses 1 to 11 He first of all reviews the same warning that He's given them and gets a little more specific about defining it. He tells them, number one, of the killing of the disciples by the world. Now we've already seen that the world is going to be hostile toward us who know Christ, hostile toward those disciples. And as best we can tell, at least ten out of...at least nine out of the eleven, perhaps ten out of the eleven, died as martyrs, killed by the world for their faith in Christ. And men today still die, they're still persecuted in Russia, various places behind the Iron Curtain it's a crime to

have a Bible, to love God. Persecution goes on all over the world.

First of all, He talks about the killing of the disciples.

And even in our world, I believe if you live godly you'll suffer persecution. Notice verse 1, verses 1 to 4 deal with the killing of the disciples by the world and this is Jesus' warning. He says, "These things have I spoken unto you that you should not be offended." And the word means trapped, or caught unaware. Jesus says I don't want you to be surprised when you get it from the world, anticipate it. Verse 2, "They will put you out of the synagogues...religious excommunication...yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that He doeth God service."

People are going to kill you in the name of religion. And if you study world history you'll find out that that's exactly what happened. Under the name of religion all kinds of atrocities have gone on in our world and the truth has been really persecuted and those who held the truth. And the reason they do it is in verse 3, "These things will they do unto you because they have not known the Father nor Me."

Isn't that interesting? Isn't that interesting that they think they're doing service to God but they don't know God at all? You know, it's a strange thing in our world but people can be superreligious, really religious and absolutely have no knowledge of God at all. There are people who can go to church and they can go through the motions, they can have a Bible, they can read their prayer book, they can go through all kinds of religious activities and be a million miles from God. He says right here people are actually going to kill Christians and think they're serving God when in fact they don't even know who God is and they don't know Me either. It's amazing how many people think they're automatically secure because they're religious.

Listen, religion doesn't mean one single solitary thing, it doesn't mean anything apart from real knowledge of God. People are trapped in systems where they go through activities and they go through things that are less than personal. And you can be very religious and not have any idea who God is or Christ. You can think you worship God and wind up worshiping a God who doesn't even exist. And people went so far as to kill Christians thinking they were doing God service. They even went so far as to kill Jesus Christ the very Son of God and think by killing Him they were serving God. And so we see then that the world is going to kill the disciples.

In verse 4 He says I didn't tell you these things earlier, paraphrasing it, because I was with you and I was getting the brunt of the attack and so you really didn't need to know all of it then. But I'm telling you now so when it happens you'll remember that I warned you. So first we saw the killing of the disciples, we went into detail on it last week by the world.

Secondly, we saw the comforting of the disciples by the Lord, verses 5 to 7. Now Jesus then gives them the same warning but He repeats the comfort. We'll look just at these verses quickly.

Verse 5, "But now I go My way to Him that sent Me and none of you asks Me, Where goest Thou, but because I have said these things unto you sorrow hath filled your heart."

In other words, I told you where I'm going but you don't really care from my standpoint that I'm going to God and what a joy that will be for Me, you're just sad because you're going to lose out. You're just selfish and you can't understand why I have to go, you want Me to stay and it's a troublesome thing for you. But look at verse 7, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you but if I depart I will send Him unto you." In other words, He says I want you to know, guys, I know it's tough and I know it's difficult to understand, but it is better for you if I go away because when I go away I'm going to send you the Holy Spirit who will dwell within you.

Now that's the point we really want to consider today, well leading up to the point beginning in verse 8. Jesus has said, first of all, the world will kill you. Secondly, I'm going to comfort you with the Holy Spirit. Thirdly He tells us about the convicting of the world by the Spirit, verses 8 to 11. And may I add at this point at little footnote? The Holy Spirit's ministry is not a negative ministry in the world, not only that. We've been seeing how the Holy Spirit is going to give them the power to make it through the world, right? To be able to make it, to overcome the world, to solve their problems in the world, to exist in the world, to confront the world. But more than that, the Spirit's ministry is a positive ministry. Not only will He just preserve the Christian through the world but He will convict the world to bring the world to a knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit's ministry in the world, then, is a positive ministry. And that's what we're going to see in verses 8 to 11.

So we see not only the killing of the disciples by the world and the comforting of the disciples by the Lord but we also see the convicting of the world by the Spirit. Jesus says I'm going to send My Spirit and He's not only going to be in you to comfort you and empower you and activate all My promises but He's going to be in this world to convict the world. He wants not only to preserve you but He wants to bring the people in the world to their knees before the cross of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is going to work to change men's hearts. He's going to work to reverse the sin problem. He's going to work to bring men to a knowledge of Jesus Christ. And Jesus says once I've accomplished My work and I've died and I've risen again, I'm going back and the Spirit's going to come and He's going to begin to move through the world to convict men that I was who I claimed to be and to show them that the only salvation is in Me. So we begin to see the convicting work of the Spirit.

Now the Holy Spirit's convicting work deals with the problem of sin. The Bible says that every man is a sinner. In Romans chapter 3 and verse 10, Paul says this talking about humanity, all men, "There is none righteous, no not one." Isn't that interesting? There's none righteous in the whole world. There's no man in the world that hasn't rebelled against God, who hasn't sinned, who isn't out of the way. There is no human being in the entire world who ever lived apart from Jesus Christ who was

perfect. Every one of them is unrighteous. Like produces like, from Adam and Eve we all came and as a result we were all sinners, every one of us. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." Men rather run from God and they don't understand God at all. They don't understand really their destiny or anything else.

Verse 12, "They're all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable," and that's the word for sour milk, they've gone sour. "There is none that doeth good, no not one."

There is none that doeth good, men don't do what is good. And so many men think they do but God says men are evil, men are rebellious, they are against God, they do not that which is good in the purest sense.

Then he describes their activities, "Their throat is an open sepulcher, with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of snakes is under their lips, their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." And it starts with the throat and then the mouth and then the lips. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."

And then describing their action, "Their feet are swift to shed blood," and we know that. "Destruction and misery are in their ways, the way of peace have they not known." What a description of our day. There's no fear of God before their eyes.

And then Paul says, "I said all this that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God." Men are sinners. Men are in rebellion against God. Men are hostile toward Jesus Christ, by nature they are. Because the god of this world is Satan and because men are born with a sin principle operating, they are at opposite ends from God. When you are born into the world, when that little baby came into your family, that little precious life, it was under the system of the world. Now I believe if a baby dies, God takes that baby to be with Him...I believe that with all my heart. But I know also that Satan rules the world and every life that comes into this world comes in with a sin principle operating in it. And I realize that it is God's desire and will to redeem that life from the clutches of sin and Satan. The world is under the control of Satan. If the world is under the control of Satan, then it is the opposite of God and it is in antagonism against God because Satan is trying to destroy everything that God stands for. You go back to his original rebellion and you'll find out what he's trying to do. He's trying to do the same thing today that he's always tried to do, destroy God, destroy Christ and destroy everything that belongs to God. And when you're born into this world and a part of the world, the sinful world, you are in Satan's grasp and set against God.

Now that explains why the world hates Jesus Christ. That explains why men and women who don't know Christ hate those who know Him. Why? Because sinfulness hates righteousness, because imperfection hates perfection, because Satanic things hate godly things. They are at two extremes of existence. And at those extreme opposites the world hates. Isn't it a beautiful thought though that

even though Jesus Christ and God are at the other end of the pull they don't hate the world, they love the world?

That's the distinction. And God desires not to take out His hatred in retaliation but to love men and to bring them to Himself.

So, what is the Holy Spirit's ministry? The Holy Spirit's ministry is to come into a world where there's righteousness in Christ over here and where there is evil and sin and rebellion over here and somehow break down that resistance, smash that wall of sin, penetrate into the hearts of individuals and bring them to the side of Jesus Christ, to bring them into fellowship with God. That's the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the world, to bring men to Jesus Christ.

Now in order to bring them to Christ He has to break the power of sin because sin is the thing that holds men in rebellion against God. Sin is the thing that separates men from God. Sin is the thing that maintains their antagonism against God. A vile man hates a holy God. He hates anybody that smacks of a holy God. The reason the world hates Christians who really live righteous lives is because they act as a living condemnation of them. And so what the Holy Spirit must do is enter into the world and break the power of sin. He must destroy the shackles of sin that bind and grip a man's heart. And that's His ministry and that's what He sets to do...to break and to shatter that sin.

Now let's notice how He does it beginning in verse 8. "And when He is come...that is the Holy Spirit and He came, you know, in the day of Pentecost about 43 days after this...when He is come He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment." Now we already learned back in chapter 15 verse 26 that the Holy Spirit would witness to Christ, didn't we? That He would testify to Christ. But more than just testifying to Christ, that's rather the outward angle, there must be a convicting ministry in the heart of a man. Additionally just proclaiming Christ, in addition to that, moving into a man's heart to bring about conviction. The Holy Spirit will not only witness to Jesus Christ then but He will open up a man's heart and He will lay it bare and He will reveal that man's sin. And praise God in the case of many He will awaken a consciousness to sin that will drive those people to the cross. And Jesus is promising here, in effect, that millions of people whose hearts are moved and torn open by the convicting work of the Spirit will come to Jesus Christ and receive Him as Savior.

And so, though the world in general will persecute the believers, there will be people after people after people whose hearts will be torn open by the convicting work of the Holy Spirit and who will be driven to the cross of Christ at which point they'll open their hearts to receive Him as Savior. And, you know, that's what it is. It's the awareness of sin that drives you to Christ. You know, the one kind of person you can't ever introduce to Jesus Christ is the person who has no recognition of his sin. You can't bring him to Jesus Christ because he has no need. It is when the Spirit of God moves into a heart and begins to rip that heart wide open and expose that sin that a man senses his own

hopelessness, his own inevitable judgment, his own fear, his own lostness, his own vileness. And at that point is compelled to seek a solution, a forgiveness, an answer, a cleansing and he moves to Jesus Christ. And so the Spirit desires then in the heart of a man to stir up a sensitivity to sin.

Now you'll notice in verse 8 that there's a word that keys the verse and it's the word "reprove." The word "reprove" is a very important word. It has two meanings theologically and I want to give them both to you then illustrate them because I think you'll understand this clearly when I've done it. First of all, the word "reprove" can be translated "convict...convict."

And it can be used in the sense of a judicial act. For example, it can be used in the sense that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of its sin. It means to convict with a view toward judgment, or to a view toward sentencing. It's a courtroom term.

In other words, it's the judge saying you are guilty, you are condemned, and then reciting the sentence. It's the idea of bringing in guilty with a view toward final judgment. So in that sense it is an objective word meaning a sentence of judgment.

And what I mean by that is this, the Holy Spirit's ministry, first of all, is then to convict men and to condemn them to hell...that's His ministry. He is responsible for judicially convicting men. He is responsible for carrying out a statement of their sentence which dooms them to hell.

You say, "You mean to tell me that Christ went away and just sent the Holy Spirit back to damn everybody?" No, I mean that Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit back to render the sentence of damnation on everybody who rejects Jesus Christ. You see, the Holy Spirit has the right to condemn a man. He has been given the judicial responsibility of carrying out sentence, declaring sentence. And so the word "convict" means then to convict or to sentence with a view to judgment. It's condemnation. The Holy Spirit is going to sentence the world of unbelievers.

Now let me give you an illustration of the use of this word.

There's a little book called the book of Jude right next to the book of Revelation. In verse 15, you don't need to look it up, it says this, and it's talking about the Second Coming of Christ when this judgment will take place, and it says, "Behold, the Lord cometh," verse 14, "with ten thousand of His saints," now watch this, verse 15, "to execute judgment upon all and to convict...or same word, convict or reprove...all that are ungodly among them all of their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." In other words, the Holy Spirit is going to come and He is going to convict men and damn them to hell in a final kind of judgment and the same word "reprove" is exactly the same word that is used right here in John chapter 16.

So in the very word that is used there is the latent fact of ultimate objective damnation and sentence that is final and eternal. And some day when Jesus comes that sentence will be carried out. And you'll notice in that verse in Jude that four times he used the word "ungodly," ungodly men who do ungodly deeds in an ungodly way, ungodly sinners. People who know better but who reject God, resist Christ because they have gone against Him, the Spirit of God finally and ultimately and fully and totally eternally convicts them of their sentence and dooms them.

That's one meaning of the word.

Let me give you another one. And here is the end of the word that is expressed in the grace terms. He says, "And when He is come He will reprove the world of sin." Now let me show you the second meaning of the word "reprove." It also means not to convict but to convince...to convince. And here it isn't an objective condemnation, here it is not the idea that the Holy Spirit is going to doom men, here it is the idea that the Holy Spirit is going to reach into the heart of an individual and lay bare his sin to convince him that he needs Jesus Christ. Do you know what the Holy Spirit wants to do? He wants to convince you so He'll never have to...what?...convict you, see. But if there is a rejection of the convincing ministry, there will be the convicting ministry, final judgment.

Now the word "convince" is the same thing. It's the same word exactly and it can mean to convince. It is a subjective realization of guilt. It is that inside you that says I'm guilty and just makes you aware of your sin. You know when you see your sin in your face and you feel it welling up inside of you like it's going to crush you, that's the Holy Spirit. You say, "Why does He want to drag that up? Why in the world does the Holy Spirit want to drag all that up?" Because then it makes you aware of the fact that your soul has a need.

I always think of the time I when I was playing football in college and had a big game on Saturday. And I wanted to play in this game because I had a chance for some good statistics, you know. And I really wanted to win this game. It was a big game and I hurt my knee on Thursday...well it was Friday I guess it was...and I twisted running a practice deal. Didn't want the coach to know because I wanted to play at any cost. So he didn't find out about it cause it happened at the end of practice. So I went to the doctor and I got some cortisone and got some little bottle of ethel chloride, you know, that's that "don't hurt no more" stuff. You squirt it, you know, and it freezes an area.

It's great if you go to a party and you have a loud mouth, you know...tschew...that's it. But anyway, it will freeze an area and it makes it painless, it completely numbs and deadens everything. So I took two bottles of that to the game with the other stuff that I had had in there. Went to the game, as it turned out I played 60 minutes, the whole game, and I had a great time. In fact, I was all over the place...I had one of the better games I've ever had, that I can remember. The only thing is, I rejected one thing, I rejected pain, I refused to acknowledge it. And as a result, I tore the whole inside of my

knee out...I just didn't know it. You see, God had built into my system a little thing called pain which told me my body had a problem. And pain isn't a bad thing, is it? Pain's a good thing. If you didn't know pain, you'd die and you wouldn't even know you were dying. You'd get killed by the littlest thing, perhaps, if you didn't have pain.

And the same thing is true with the way the Spirit of God works in your life. You can't say, "Oh, Holy Spirit, what do you want to drag that up?" Listen, it's the love of God that makes the Holy Spirit do conviction because if you don't know your sin then you don't know your need. And if you don't know your need then you're never going to go to Jesus Christ to get the answer to your need. So the Spirit of God works in your life to lay bare your heart, to convict you of sin, to make you feel sick to your stomach about your sin. And it's a loving thing because He wants to convince you of sin and drive you to Jesus Christ so you'll never have to be convicted of sin and driven into hell.

And you have the choice. And all men who do not respond in repentance to the convicting ministry respond in judgment to the convicting ministry.

So, the Spirit's task, and a loving task it is, is to bring men to Jesus Christ by exposing their sin to them. It works.

I've talked to so many people who've come to me with a sense of sin. And when I get somebody to talk to who has an overwhelming sense of sin, I've got somebody ready to meet Jesus Christ. When somebody comes in to talk to me and the tears are streaming down their face and they're saying I'm sick of it, I hate my life, sin is driving me crazy and I'm rebelling against...I can say praise the Lord, this is exciting...you know, and they never understand that. I'm so glad you're so crudy, you know, and I'm so glad you know you're so crudy, now we can do something about it. A person you can't do anything with is a selfrighteous person who says I don't need anything, I'm in. I just have to say I'm sorry, I can't help you. The Spirit of God has to convict.

Now let me show you the three things that the Spirit uses to convict men...sin, righteousness, judgment. You see them there in verse 8, don't you? Then He details them in verses 9, 10 and 11. And they're very, very important. The Holy Spirit convicts men by awakening their conscience to these three things: sin, righteousness and judgment. I'll show you how it works.

Number one, verse 9, first of all He convinces them of sin and also ultimately will convict them of it, of sin...watch this one...because they believe not on Me. Now who is the "Me" here?

Jesus Christ. Now get that verse again. He convicts them of sin because they believe not on Me. Now that works both ways of conviction. In the final judgment when it is put down on the line whether a man goes into heaven or hell, whether he goes to heaven or hell will be determined on whether or not he believed in Jesus Christ. And in the area of inward convincing the Spirit also works in a man's

heart to show him what a serious thing it is to reject Jesus. All the way along the Spirit keeps saying you shouldn't reject Christ, you shouldn't reject Christ, you shouldn't do it, you shouldn't do it. And then ultimately He'll say because you did it you're condemned. So you see it works both ways. Here is the great...watch this one...here is the great damning climactic sin, failure to believe in Jesus Christ.

That's it.

Now think about it. He...the word isn't plural there. He isn't saying convicting of sins. Some people think that what the Holy Spirit wants to do is run around and convict you of all your little sins. Well that...part of it is that the Spirit of God makes you aware of sin, but conscience does that. And there are plenty of commands in the Word of God to do that. You know what it is to lie, cheat, steal, be unclean morally, you know all of those things. What the Holy Spirit concentrates on is not convicting you of every little sin but convicting you of that classic sin of rejecting Jesus Christ. Do you see? That's what it says. Convict of sin, singular. What sin? The sin of not believing on Me.

Have you ever felt that in your heart? Have you ever felt the Spirit of God, something inside of you saying you ought to believe in Jesus? You ought to give your life to Jesus. You ought to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior. You ought to put your faith in Him. You know who that is? That's the Holy Spirit. That's the Holy Spirit convincing you of the sin of not believing in Christ. And if you continue to reject that, some day He will convict you of that sin finally and then it's too late.

And so, the Holy Spirit moves to show men Jesus Christ. And don't you remember that I've told you a couple of times, at least, that that's always the Holy Spirit's ministry, isn't it?

To declare Christ...always. And the great damning sin is to reject Him. Jesus even said that in John 3:18, He said this: "He that believeth on Him is not condemned but he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." John said that's it. You believe in Christ, you're not condemned, you don't believe in Christ, you're condemned already. You're damned because the crux of the issue is Jesus Christ. It's not how good you are. It doesn't matter how good you are. It's not how bad you are. It doesn't matter how bad you are. It's whether or not you believe in Jesus Christ that is the issue and received Him as your personal Savior whether you've had a sense of sin and repented.

In John chapter 5 and verses 40 Jesus said it this way: "And you will not come to Me that you might have life." He doesn't say your problem is you've got a lot of little sins, He says your problem is you won't come to Me and I'm the only answer. In verse 43 He said, "I am come in My Father's name and ye receive Me not." That's your problem. Chapter 8 and verse 24, Jesus said, "I said therefore unto you, you shall die in your sins."

Why? "Because if you believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."

Listen, friends, let me put it as simply as I can. If you stand at the last day, the day of judgment, it will not simply be because of the sins of your daily life. No, no. It will be because of the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ.

In Mark 16:16, listen, and this is important. "He that believeth...and as always in the early church the pattern of that belief was made visible by baptism...he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Watch this, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Did you get that? It doesn't say he that doesn't do 89 little good works, it's not that...God isn't keeping score. People have the idea that God's got a super computer and He puts in your sins and your good things and if it all matches out and He says..."Yeah, well, you've got a little more on this side, come on, you're okay." No. "He that believeth not is damned." It isn't even a question of sins. I say it this way, the great question between God and man is not the sin question, it's the Son question. That's why Paul said, "If thou shalt believe in thine heart the Lord Jesus Christ, thou shalt confess with thy mouth." That's the issue, concerning Christ not whether you're good, bad or indifferent. The question is a question of whether you've ever met Jesus.

Boy, the Jewish people were good people by human standards.

They were religious. Do you know that when they crucified Jesus they didn't believe they were sinning, they believed they were serving God? But you want to know what happened? Acts chapter 2, Peter got up and he preached and he said you didn't serve God, people, when you did that, you sinned and you sinned monstrously, you crucified the Son of God. And you know what the Bible says when he said that? You know what happened to them? The Bible says they were cut to the heart. Now when Peter preached, who was really preaching through him? Who had just filled him? The Holy Spirit. And you know what the Holy Spirit's ministry was to those Jewish people through Peter? It was a ministry of...what?

Conviction. And they were cut to the heart. Oh, they had that sudden terrible conviction that the crucifixion was a crime against God. That's the work of the Holy Spirit.

Thirtythousand people died around the time of Jesus on crosses. We don't know the name of any but Him. What is it about a criminal who is crucified two thousand years ago in Palestine?

What is it about a man like that that can tear the people...tear people's hearts open? What is it? I'll tell you what it is, it's the work of the Holy Spirit. You can come to a service like this or many other services or that you've perhaps been to and you can hear about Jesus Christ and inside you feel a pain and you feel a turmoil and a tearing and a fight going on and you know Christ is speaking and you see your sin and it's right in front of you and you're fighting against it and saying, "I'm not so bad

and I don't want this stuff," and you want to get out of here as fast as you can and yet you feel the surge of your sin, that's the Holy Spirit convicting you. And He's not just convicting you of the little sins you do every day, He's convicting you of the monstrous sin of rejecting Jesus Christ.

You see, that's the final crowning proof of the world's sin. You don't think that this is a sinful world? Then if it isn't explain to me how men can turn down the blessed Son of God. Just explain that. I mean when the tourist remarked in the Bargetal(?) that he...in Europe...that he had...didn't like the pictures, the custodian said, "Sir, these pictures aren't on trial, you are." Perhaps the Holy Spirit right now is convicting you of rejecting Christ.

In John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Man's Soul who is, you know, the unregenerate man, unsaved man, just man, in his beautiful allegory, Man's Soul has forsaken all allegiance to God, typical man, you know, God can just go, you know, do whatever He wants to do, He has no place in my life. So naturally men want to get rid of God...the first thing they do is they take Mr. Conscience and they shut him up. They don't want Conscience bugging them. So they shut him up, they put him in his house, bar his door, blind the windows. And Mr. Conscience has a big bell that he always rings, you know, you know that bell?

Yeah, it works in me, too. And so they cut the rope of Mr.

Conscience's bell so he can't ring it. And they think, "We've got it solved. Man, we've got it barred, locked, the widows closed and the bell rope cut." But somehow Mr. Conscience keeps getting out and ringing the bell. And you can praise God for that because that's the Holy Spirit. You can try to cut if off every way you want to cut it but the Spirit of God just keeps on working to convict you of sin. And maybe you've rejected Christ a lot but you're here this morning and you can't figure out why.

I know why, the Spirit of God's ringing the bell. If you haven't trusted Christ, I say to you with all the love in my heart and yet all the urgency, you are guilty of the most terrible, the most horrible and the only unforgivable sin possible, that of rejecting Jesus Christ.

So, the Holy Spirit not only convicts of that sin of not believing on Christ, but secondly the Holy Spirit convicts of righteousness because "I go to My Father and you see Me no more."

You know, this is the other side, see. The Holy Spirit not only shows us how bad we are, but He shows us how good Christ is, see.

He convicts of righteousness, Christ said, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more.

You see, the world has no adequate sense of righteousness.

Have you ever noticed that the lower we all go the lower our standards get? Did you know that? I mean, the more really gross we become the lower the standards go. We are relative because we measure...Paul says you've got to stop measuring yourselves by yourselves. Do you see? "Well, I'm not so bad, look at the creep down the street." See, we compare ourselves always with somebody like...that really, you know, makes us look good. Paul says cut that stuff out, you're going to damn yourselves if you keep on measuring yourselves by yourselves. I mean, you've got to have a true standard of righteousness and there's only one that exists and that's Christ the perfect man. And if you want to know how really bad you are, compare yourself with Jesus Christ. You know what the Holy Spirit does? The Holy Spirit wants to show you the righteousness of Christ so you'll know how really bad you are.

Now I want to show you the little phrase here, "Of righteousness because I go to My Father and you see Me no more."

What's the significance of that phrase? Have you ever thought about that? I'll tell you what it is. You want to know what the greatest proof...now watch this one, oh, this is good...you know what the greatest proof was of the righteousness of Jesus Christ?

It was the fact that God...watch it...accepted Him into His presence. Did you see that? Jesus was on the cross and what had God laid on Him when He was on the cross? Sin...sin. And Jesus bore that sin away, came out of the grave and the Father said come on up. And Jesus says I can prove My righteousness because the Father accepted Me into His presence. Can God accept anything in His presence that isn't righteous? Habakkuk said, "God is of purer eyes then to behold evil and canst not look upon iniquity." No. And when Jesus entered into the presence of the Father, that was God saying, "You are righteous." And why...that's what He's saying here, "Of righteousness, how do I know He's righteous? How do I know Christ was perfect? Because I go to My Father, that's how. God accepted Me totally, completely without reservation." In fact Philippians 2 verse 9, Paul says, "God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, things in the earth and under the earth, every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God."

He was righteous. He was absolutely righteous. And God would never have accepted Him into His presence if He hadn't been because there is no way that righteousness can fellowship with unrighteousness, 2 Corinthians 6:14, it can't happen. First John 3:10, I love it, John said, "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God." You can't enter into God's presence apart from being totally perfect, totally righteous, totally right. You say, "Well, that really messes me up, I'll never get there." No, because you want to know something wonderful? When you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, His righteousness is imputed to you and you enter into God's presence just as perfect as Jesus. God just cleans your sin...slate. God just wipes it away and forgives and God gives you the

righteousness of Christ for He made Him to be sin, Christ, for us who knew no sin that we might be made...what?...the righteousness of God in Him. Christ bore our sin and we get His righteousness, that's an exchange. When you put your faith in Christ and receive Him as your Savior and Lord, His righteousness becomes yours and you can enter into the presence of God but He had to die to do it because He had to bear your sin.

Oh, it's a fantastic thing to realize. Acts 10:35 is an interesting verse along this line. I had some others but I'll skip them. Acts 10:35 says this, "But in every nation...this is good...he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." You see, acceptance with God is based on righteousness. That's the only way God can ever accept anybody is on righteousness. And not my own righteousness, no way. Mine won't make it...not at all. It's got to be His. The only standard of righteousness is Jesus Christ.

In Romans chapter 4 and verse 5 we read this, and this is concerning Jesus Christ, it says, "But to him...now watch this...but to him that worketh not but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Don't you like that? "But to him that worketh not...." did you get that? It's not on your good works. You don't get righteous by being a goodygoodgood, you can't be goodygoodgood enough.

You are made righteous only when you've put your faith in Jesus Christ, you accept His death in your behalf, you repent of your sin and His righteousness becomes yours. It's not to him that works but to him that believes in Jesus Christ.

In 3:26 of Romans it goes this way, it says that He might be just, that is Christ, His righteousness and that He might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. There's only one way to be righteous before God, believe in Jesus. You say, "What if I'm religious?" No, no, no. "What if I go to church or I go to this deal..." No, no. "What if I read my Bible?" No. "What if I read religious books?" No, no. "What if I, you know, help the United Fund?" No, that's not it either.

It's not to him that works, it's to him that believes. So you see it's not a sin question it's a what? It's a Son question.

Salvation...it doesn't matter how good you are, it doesn't matter how rotten you are, that isn't even the issue, it's by believing in Jesus Christ.

And what is it that convinces a man that Jesus is so righteous? It's the work of the Holy Spirit. It's the work of the Holy Spirit. He takes the Word of God, He takes the word of a preacher of God and He brings it to bear in your heart and you begin to see the beauty and the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

So the Holy Spirit confronts the world with the righteousness of Christ. And when a man responds by receiving Christ, he has the wonderful experience of the Apostle Paul, and listen to what Paul said in Philippians 3;7, what a testimony this is. "But what things were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ." I gave up everything for Him, everything. "Yea, doubtless and I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." He said I don't even need anything, I just want Him. And then watch this, "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but garbage that I may win Christ." And watch this, "And be found in Him not having mine own righteousness but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." That's what Paul says I want. I don't want to stand before God with my own crummy righteousness which Isaiah says is like filthy rags, I want to stand in His righteousness. And it's only to those who believe and receive Him.

All right, then thirdly, the Holy Spirit convicts in verse 11 of judgment because the prince of this world is judged. Now who is the prince of this world? That's Satan, isn't it? Was he judged? Where was he judged? He was judged on the cross. And the death of Jesus Christ, what looked like Satan's greatest victory, was Satan's death blow because Jesus went into that grave but He came out the other side. And He said, "Satan, I just conquered you." Because, you see, Satan's greatest power, Hebrews 2:14 and 15, Satan's greatest power is the power of what?

Of death. And in Hebrews 2 it says He destroyed him that had the power of death because He went into the grave and out the other side. And He can say to you and to me and every man that ever lives, "Because I live...what?...ye shall live also." And Satan was wiped out. He judged him. He bruised his head.

And you know what happens? As you read further in the Bible you find that Paul says in Colossians 2 that He's made an open triumph over Satan and his hosts. You read in Revelation 20 that finally in the end time He's going to take Satan and throw him in the pit and bind him a thousand years and then after that He's going to cast him into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels forever. Satan is a defeated judged enemy.

Now you say, "What does that mean to me?" Watch this. He's going to convict you of judgment because the prince of this world is judged. Listen to me, if Jesus Christ can destroy and judge the greatest sinner in the universe, do you think you're going to get away? Do you? Satan is kind of a guarantee of the judgment of every sinner. If Jesus Christ swung the death blow at Satan and hit dead center, you don't think that someone less than Satan is going to get away. When Satan was judged, every man and every angel that ever attached himself to Satan was damned with him.

And you know what the Holy Spirit wants you to know? He wants you to know that Satan's judged because He wants you to know that all those who are Satan's children are judged so that you'll wake

up to the fact that judgment is inevitable if you don't receive Jesus Christ. The cross was judgment. Calvary was judgment. Calvary was God's blow on Satan, crushing him. And Satan's judgment was the guarantee of judgment for every other sinner that ever lives. But the Holy Spirit wants you to know that. You know why? Because He wants you to get ready to make some changes in your life so that you don't suffer the same judgment that Satan suffered. Isn't it strange that even after the Holy Spirit tells men this and warns them of the judgment they continue to follow Satan? And if they don't respond to the convincing of judgment, they will be convicted ultimately.

The world is messed up. Our world is so selfcentered. The world has decided that it will judge everything. The world thinks it's the judge of everything. My Bible says that God is the judge. Christ will be the executor of judgment, sentence will be passed by the Holy Spirit on all of those who refuse to be convinced in their heart that they need Jesus Christ. That's what the Holy Spirit does, He shows you the monstrous sin of rejecting Christ. He shows you how righteous Christ is. And that's the only way God can ever accept you and the only way you can ever be righteous is in Christ. And then He shows you that anybody, Satan included, who is apart from God, rebellious and sinful will be damned forever.

You say, "Why does He show me all that?" Cause He loves you. Cause He wants you to wake up to your sin and come to Jesus. That's the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And you can respond to it two ways. The day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, Peter got up and he was filled with the Holy Spirit and so the Holy Spirit convicted men through him. First Peter preached about the sin of rejecting Christ. Secondly, he preached about the righteousness of Christ in Acts 2. Thirdly, in verses 35 and 40 he preached about the judgment. He took these same three thingssin, righteousness and judgmentthey were the basis of Peter's sermon and the Holy Spirit used those things to convict.

And you know what happened that day? How many people came to Jesus? Three thousand. You know why? Because the Holy Spirit had done more than witness, what else had He done? He convicted them, hadn't He?

I hope you respond like those three thousand and like thousands and millions since. There's another way to respond.

In Acts 24 and verse 25 Paul stood before Felix and we read this in verse 24, "And after certain days when Felix came with his wife Priscilla who was a Jewess, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ." Now watch this, "And he reasoned of righteousness," and there we are again, "of temperance, or control, controlling sin, and of judgment." Same three things. "And Felix," it says, "trembled." You think he was convicted? Oh you better believe he was convicted. And he answered and here was his answer, "Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for you." My Bible never records that Felix had a convenient season. Paul was used by the Holy Spirit to show him sin, righteousness and judgment and he said, "Go away, if I ever have time I'll call you

again."

Our Father, we thank You this morning that we have been able to see again clearly the work of the Holy Spirit. We know what a tremendous ministry it is to reach into the hearts of men and lay bare their sin. Father, I just grieve in my heart even for Felix and yet I know there are people like Felix probably sitting in this building right now who feel conviction, who are trembling on the inside, who are shaking but who will say, "Well, I'll come some other time and hear this again." God, let it not be so.

May there be many like the day of Pentecost who will run to Jesus Christ for the only salvation they'll ever know. May they respond to the convincing ministry of the Spirit that they not be sentenced by His convicting.

Now, Father, as we close our service, we ask that You would speak to the hearts of all of us as pointedly as we need to hear in specifics and, Father, we ask that we would not be held by Satan but that everyone would respond as the Spirit directs.

While your heads are bowed for just a moment, let me say this...that some of you know you need Jesus Christ, you need Him desperately and you know it and you've been convicted this morning. Oh, I plead with you, respond to that conviction. Right now just say yes to Jesus Christ, just say I need You and I receive You right now into my life, forgive my sin and make me what You want me to be. Just in the silence of your heart do it.

Respond to that ministry of the Spirit. Enter into that beautiful relationship with God. I pray that you will.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2014 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).