

## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE WORLD

John 16:7-11

**Intro:** Evidence is given of the Trinity all through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. But it seems that in the OT the emphasis is upon God generally, but perhaps with the main point being upon God the Father. When we come to the four Gospels in the NT the emphasis, of course, is upon the Second Person of the Godhead, our Lord Jesus Christ. But as the Lord Jesus prepared His disciples for the time following His own resurrection, He left no doubt but that the emphasis would be upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that the NT does not deal with God the Father, or God the Son, because from the beginning of time, as I have just mentioned, and throughout the Bible, we are continually learning about all three Members of the Godhead. But still we can detect that at different times the emphasis has been upon God, and then the Son, and then upon the Holy Spirit.

One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is that of restraining sin. All of us would sin more than we do, even though we are saved, if it were not for the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. But He also exercises a restraining influence upon the whole world. If He did not restrain sin, life would be impossible upon the earth. Well, when the Lord comes, and the Church is removed from the earth, that restraining of sin which the Holy Spirit has been doing throughout time, but especially in the present age, will be strikingly reduced, and the result will be the Great Tribulation on the earth.

Paul wrote about this in one of his first epistles, his second epistle to the church at Thessalonica. Let me read to you what he said. Unfortunately in the KJV it is expressed in an Old English verb, and so we miss the point of what Paul was saying if we don't check the meaning of the words. Let me read to you the passage I am talking about. If you want to look at it, it is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12:

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that

perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a [the] lie:

12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The word that I want you to notice in this passage is the word, “letteth.” We read also this verb in a future form, “will let.” Today the word *let* means *to permit*, or *to allow*. But if you consult a good dictionary, you will find that it used to mean, *to hinder*, or *to prevent*. The Member of the Godhead whose work it is now to hinder sin, is going to be taken away with the Church, and so sin will to a large extent be unrestrained during the Great Tribulation.

Actually neither God the Father, nor the Lord Jesus Christ, nor the Holy Spirit can be removed from anywhere. They are omnipresent, or present everywhere. But it is an accommodation to us to say that the One Who restrains sin will be taken out of the way. This simply means that in the Tribulation He won't be controlling sin like He does now.

But add to this the idea that the Holy Spirit, Who is omnipresent, is said to abide in us. We had that back in John 14:16-17. (Read.) The Lord Jesus repeated that truth in the first verse of our text for today. In John 16:7 we have this great truth about the gift of the Holy Spirit repeated. And at the very beginning of the verse the Lord affirmed that He was telling His disciples the truth. He never told them anything but the truth, but He stated it here as a kind of a pledge, or even as an oath, that He would send the Holy Spirit to them.

So in verse 7 of John 16 we have:

### **I. THE LORD'S DECLARATION OF THE TRUTH (John 16:7).**

I don't know if anyone, the apostles, the Apostle John the writer, or all of the godly expositors who have commented on it from that day to this, has fully understood the meaning of the Lord's words here. “Expedient” means *profitable*. The Lord was saying that it was better for them that He go away because if He did not go away the Comforter (Whom He had already identified in 14:16 and 17) would not come to them.

These words are most often explained that the Lord was saying that it

would be better for them to have the Holy Spirit with each one of them than for the Lord to continue in His physical body where He could only be one place at a time. But later did not the Apostle Paul write to the churches of Galatia, “Christ liveth in me” (Gal. 2:20)?

I repeat: I don’t know if anyone has the full truth of this statement. But what we can do with this statement, is *to believe it*. It surely emphasizes how extremely important it is for us that the Holy Spirit has been given to us, to abide with us forever! What an amazing fact this is! It is the truth! The Lord Jesus said it was, so it has to be true.

This marked a tremendous step forward in God’s dealing with His people. And yet too often those who are saved are like those early Christians in Ephesus to whom the Apostle Paul asked, “Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?” And they answered, “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit” (Acts 19:2). They had a good excuse because the Holy Spirit had not yet been given to them. But now we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit when we are saved, and yet there are professing Christians who don’t know Who the Holy Spirit is, not why He has been given to us.

Well, hopefully in the days ahead we are going to learn more about the Holy Spirit. But for now we need to pay close attention to these words of our Lord Jesus Christ which were spoken to His apostles on the eve of His arrest, which was followed the next day by His crucifixion. Verse 16 has everything in it to commend it to us for our understanding. What the Lord promised here is now history. The Holy Spirit dwells in us and has been in us since we were saved. But how much attention have we given to Him. Do we know what the Lord went on to say about why the Holy Spirit has been given to us?

Let’s go on to verse 8 to find out what the Lord had in mind as He spoke these words. I will call this:

## **II. ONE REASON FOR THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (John 16:8-11).**

The reason has three parts. “He will reprove the world of sin, and righteousness, and judgment.”

But I want you to notice carefully how verses 7 and 8 are related to each

other. Verse 7 ends with the words, “but if I depart, I will send Him (notice that He is a Person) unto you.” And then verse 8 begins, “And when He is come . . .” What are we to understand about His coming? Didn’t the Lord mean when He said, “I will send Him unto you,” and then went on to say, “And when He is come,” our Lord was indicating, “And when He is come *unto you*.” What was the reason expressed here as to why the Lord would send the Holy Spirit unto the apostles? Wasn’t it that when the Holy Spirit came upon them, one of His ministries would be *that through them*, “He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

What was the Lord referring to when He used the term, “the world.” He was talking about the people in the world, but in particular the people in the world who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. And what did he mean by the word “reprove”? It means both *to convince* and *to convict*.

The Lord was speaking of the evangelization of the world. He was speaking of how Christians, the true people of God, would awaken people in the world to the truth of the Gospel.

If you and I are going to reach people in a convincing and convicting way, convincing them of their need, and convicting them that what the Gospel has done in our lives, the Lord can do in their lives, it will be by what they see in our lives that they just don’t see everywhere. One reason that more people are not asking us for a reason as to why we are what we are, is because we know so little about the need for the Holy Spirit’s work in our hearts. Believers who try to be like the world in order to win the world, have everything backwards. What is going to attract the world, is not an attempt to show how great we are, but it is going to be attracted by the work that the Holy Spirit is doing in us to make us pleasing to God in what we are and the way in which we live. Of course we have to talk about the Gospel, but people need to be able to see what God will do for them by the Gospel of Christ by seeing what He has done, and continues to so, in our lives.

Now what three areas in particular did the Lord mention? There are three.

**A. “Of sin, because they believe not on Me” (John 16:9)**

Let me make one point very clear. We are not going to convince and

convict everyone in the world. God is the One Who has determined by His divine decree who He is going to save, but we have a responsibility before God in reaching the Lord.

Now the people in the world do not like to talk about sin. Most people will admit that they don't live up to their own standards. They admit that they fail, that they don't always do what they should do. But they don't like to call sin what it is, because that brings God into the picture, or into the conversation. And yet when they see a life that has been transformed so that that person not only doesn't do what he, or she, used to do, but doesn't want to do what he used to do, there is a strong possibility that they are going to want to know *why*.

It seems to me that people generally are concerned about the way things are going in our world today. Politicians are inclined to believe that if we give people what they want, they are going to be happy, and their lives will be different. But people are so corrupted in their hearts that the more you give them, the more they want. And bad situations just become worse. What people need to realize is that the only solution that there is for sin, is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So the Holy Spirit has been given to us for many reasons, but one of the main reasons in our relationship with a sin-sick world, is to show by our faith in Christ, and only by faith in Christ, we can be delivered from the domination and power of sin. It is because we are sinners at heart that we sin. Only by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ can we be delivered from the power of sin, and from the penalty of death that hangs over every person until they turn to Christ Who died to save sinners from their sin.

But there is another message that holy lives are meant to convey to a sinning world. The Lord's second statement is:

**B. "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see Me no more" (John 16:10).**

The Lord was covering a lot of truth in these words which He spoke to His disciples, and it is probably true that no one has ever sounded the depths of all that the Lord was saying here. It is a glorious thing when people learn that the remedy for sin is faith in Jesus Christ is the remedy for sin. But there is another aspect of our sin that we as those believe in Christ can witness to people who are still in sin without Christ. People don't usually read the Bible, and so there are a lot of wonderful teachings

which they need to understand. A Christian is one who not only has come to understand how sin can be overcome through Christ, but He knows that through Christ we have perfect and eternal acceptance with God. A child of God has a righteous standing before God.

The people of the world need to learn that through Christ we have peace with God. We are reconciled to God. Through faith in Christ we are no longer enemies. The Lord said in this verse that through us people in the world need to learn that through Christ, and only through Christ, we are declared righteous before God.

Notice in verse 10 that the Lord said, “Of righteousness because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more.” He had come from the Father by a virgin birth. He was going back to the Father by way of death and resurrection. The reason we can’t solve our own relationship with God is because we are all sinners, and the wages of sin is death. Jesus Christ was not a sinner, and therefore He could take our place, die the death that we deserved to die, and by His death He satisfied all of the righteous demands of God concerning our sins. And so when we put our faith in Christ, we are trusting in one who died for our sins, and has completely put away our sins so that they will never be charged against us again. Among other things, our Lord’s words, “and ye see Me no more,” He meant that He would not have to come again in order to save sinners. By His one death our eternal salvation was totally secured.

But we have one more verse to consider.

**C. “Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged”  
(John 16:11).**

To whom was the Lord Jesus referring when He spoke of “the prince of this world.” What does “prince” mean? It means the one who has the highest rank in power among the people of the world.

In 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 the Apostle Paul wrote these words:

3 But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Do you know that hell was prepared for the Devil and his angels? That is what our Lord said according to Matthew 25:41. The Devil, originally a

glorious angel, was the one who tempted and succeeded to get Adam and Eve to sin, and so the whole human race became sinners, alienated from our holy God. When the Lord Jesus died on the Cross, He not only satisfied a holy God concerning our sins, thus securing our forgiveness and salvation, but He defeated the Devil, sealing his doom in the lake of fire. And we who are saved are trophies of the grace of God. One thing Christ had to do to secure our salvation, was to defeat the Devil. This He did by His death on the Cross. So even though man has been blinded to the truth of salvation, the Lord Jesus has defeated our enemy and set us free from the Devil and from the sin by which he brought a curse of sin and death upon the whole human family. Christ is the Victor over sin and its consequences. Christ has secure perfect righteousness with us before God. And by His death He not only delivered us from sin, secured our righteousness in the court of heaven, but defeated our enemy, once and for all.

**Concl:** The Holy Spirit has been given to us that through us, who we are by the grace of God, and by the lives of holiness which God enables us to live by the Spirit, we are the message and we give the message that who-ever believes in Christ shall not perish but have eternal life. Let us make sure that we are walking in the Spirit daily, letting our light shine. We never know who is watching us. It is the Spirit Who enables us to shine forth speaking the Gospel, and living the Gospel, that through us others may be drawn to Christ.

Who is sufficient for these things,” Paul asked. And then he gave the answer, “Our sufficiency is of God.”