

## I Go Away for Your Advantage

Text: John 16:5-15

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Scr. Reading: John 16:5-15

**BELIEVE! The Gospel of John**

I want you to imagine yourself as a member of an elite fighting squad, prepping with your team the night before an urgent mission. Your squad has the latest tech and the best training. Every person in the unit has an impressive résumé of accomplishments and honors, and you've each been handpicked for this mission. Your squad leader is the best of the best, and he has prepared you well. On this final night, he has taken extensive time to reassure you, highlight key aspects of your training, and rehearse your responsibilities in your mission. As his talk wraps up, he says, "The enemy will be ruthless. Some of you will die. But so that you will have the greatest possible advantage... I am leaving. Yep, I'm not going with you, and that is for your advantage."

That's what Jesus does to His disciples in John 16:

**15:27 [Mission]** *You also will bear witness about me, because you have been with me from the beginning.*

**v2 [Danger]** *They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.*

**v5 [My Plan]** *I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'*

**v7 [Your Benefit]** *Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away...*

Actually, that announcement of the leader leaving the night before the launch of the big mission is really the only parallel between this scene and the one I told you to imagine. These guys are not elite, well-trained agents; they are uneducated fishermen and nobodies. Their unit commander isn't just "leaving"; He is going to be killed. They have no technology; their only real weapon is a bizarre and off-putting message: "Jesus of Nazareth, a Jewish carpenter & rabbi, was killed by the Jews and Romans, but he came back to life. God is going to use that to repair all the problems in the world. And you have to believe this or you're lost forever."

And yet this little band of men changed the world. How? The Holy Spirit. THAT is why Jesus left, and that is the advantage He said His leaving would procure for them:

**vv5-7** *But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'* <sup>6</sup> *But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.* <sup>7</sup> *Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your*

*advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.*

Two questions may come into your mind as you ponder verse 7:

- Why does the HS need to "come"? If He's God, isn't He already present everywhere? Yes, the Scriptures clearly teach that the HS is present everywhere (Ps 139:7-12). But He hasn't always performed the two functions Jesus describes next. These are new, and so the Spirit is going to "come" in the sense of this magnified influence in the world and the church.
- Why does Jesus need to leave in order for the Spirit to come? Jesus' "going" must be understood to include the path to the cross. He is "going away" to His death, burial, and resurrection, after which He will ascend to the Father, take His seat alongside the Father on the throne of the universe, and pour out (some of) the blessings of the future kingdom age on the world today. ***The blessing of the Spirit comes to the world only as a result of this work Jesus does.*** The finished work of Jesus' "going" makes possible this ministry of the Spirit.

This whole subject comes up because Jesus wants to correct two inappropriate responses from the disciples:

- v5 They haven't asked Him where He's going. Sure, Peter asked this in 13:36, but apparently it wasn't the kind of sincere inquiry Jesus expected. (There's a way to ask questions like this as a complaint, not an honest appeal for more info.) ***Jesus wants to teach them where He's going and why and how, but they don't appreciate the importance of His topic.*** All they can think about is that He's leaving them.
- v6 They are filled with sorrow. Jesus doesn't appreciate that reaction either. In His view, they should be *glad* He's leaving for His own sake (14:28) and for theirs—because of the advantages the Holy Spirit will bring them once Jesus finishes His course and sends the Spirit in power.

All of which brings us to this: What advantages does the Holy Spirit bring? This is the longest section of teaching on the Holy Spirit in the entire New Testament (vv5-15), and Jesus spends most of it describing two unique and beneficial ministries of the Spirit:

**v8** *And when he comes, he will convict the world...*

**v13** *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...*  
These are the two reasons it is better for Jesus to go away and the Spirit to come. Regardless of the joy and wonder you might experience if Jesus were here in person in your life, THIS is better!

## The Holy Spirit CONVICTS the World

**v8** *And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:*

As far as I know, this is the only place in the Bible where the HS is clearly said to have a ministry to the world (vs. the people of God). What is it? Conviction.

It's a word used 18x in NT, always with reference to showing someone his sin so as to bring to repentance:

**3:20** *For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.*

The word has the idea of a cross-examination—"convince, expose, charge with blame, demonstrate error." The HS will reprove the world until they are convinced. The Holy Spirit's ministry then is to establish the world's criminal responsibility in the eyes of a court of law, specifically with regard to three topics: sin, righteousness, judgment.

## SIN

**v9** *concerning sin, because they do not believe in me;*

Most societies are concerned about sin in one way or another. "Murder is bad. Stealing is bad. Adultery is bad." In our culture, the really bad things are hatred, bigotry, oppression, injustice. But the Holy Spirit doesn't target any of that primarily. There's one dividing issue—one particular sin—that the Holy Spirit is most concerned about. Of all the sins in people's lives, this is the main one He wants to finger—**they don't believe in Jesus.**

THIS is the single problem we should be concerned about in lost people's lives. Yes, their other sins add to their misery, but the fundamental problem is this: They do not believe in Jesus. Their addictions, their inverted values, their beliefs about evolution, their

disordered sex lives—these are all secondary at best!

Do you realize it is a SIN to fail to believe in Jesus? He is worthy of your trust. He is worthy of your surrender. He is worthy of your love. And those who don't are guilty. But when the HS convicts people of this sin in their relationship to Jesus, something supernatural happens. They don't turn over a new leaf or get religion. They are born again!

## RIGHTEOUSNESS

**v10** *concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer;*

No doubt, the HS convicts people of their own empty self-righteousness—their own claim to be good enough just as they are. One of the main things Jesus did was convince people their own righteousness was inadequate:

**7:7** *The world hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.*

Do you understand why this ministry of the HS is so important? Jesus comes saying, "I'm here to help you! I'm your Savior." The gospel says: "God is on your side. He's come to help." Why don't people flock to that message? Because the offer of help is an insult when you don't think you need it!

ILLUS: Imagine trying to explain baseball to the lady sitting next to you at a high school game, only to learn she's actually scout for the Cubs.

This is one of the difficulties sharing Christ in Parker—people are too good to need Jesus. They aren't amazed by grace because they don't think they need it! Usually people here need to encounter a trial before they look to God for help. But we can surface their self-righteousness and expose its emptiness, too. The HS is eager to convict the world.

TRY THIS: Most people in Parker believe in God; they just don't believe everything the Bible says about Him (judgment, authority, righteousness). Next time you are having a discussion with a friend say: "Can I ask you a question? How can you assume God is happy with you when you don't even give Him the most basic expression of respect all people expect? Let's say your neighbor loves burgers and beer and NASCAR, but you go up to him and say, 'Isn't all that meat and power rather barbaric? I like to think of you as a

vegetarian who loves art museums and opera. So... shouldn't you reexamine your attitude toward God? Might He have good reason to judge you?"

Of course, not everybody is too good to be saved. Some think they are too bad—they've messed up so badly, God could never be happy with them. Jesus has that problem in mind here, too:

**v10** *concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer;*

The HS convicts the world of what true righteousness is and where it can be found. The gospel tells us that there is One who was entirely righteous. How can you know that He was good enough for you? Because after He died, He was entirely received up to the Father. Earth pronounced a verdict upon Him, condemned Him, murdered Him, and buried Him in a tomb. But 3 days later God reversed that verdict, raised that Man from the dead, brought Him up to heaven, and appointed Him as Judge of the living and the dead. ***He's gone, and you see Him no more. THAT proves His sacrifice was good enough.*** There's more righteousness in Christ than sin in you.

#### JUDGMENT

**v11** *concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*

Jesus stated several times that He did not come to judge the world (3:17, 8:15, 12:47). But He did come to judge the ruler of this world.

**12:31** *Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.*

How? On the cross, where Jesus offers salvation to the world and simultaneously pronounces judgment upon Satan.

There's an important lesson in the cross for the world to learn—namely, that God will deal with sin one way or the other. The cross reveals God's grace, but it also reveals His judgment. The HS's ministry to the world is to expose God's inevitable judgment against sin which is spent on Jesus for the sins of those who trust Him but will be spent on all those whose sins are not covered by the sacrifice of Christ.

What an advantage it is for us to have this ministry of the Spirit! Though the world will hate you (15:18ff), some will come under the conviction

of the Spirit and be converted. The mission will succeed!

ILLUS: my experience on the plane to Kenya. "Why do you want to force your views on these people? Doesn't Africa have bigger needs than Western religion?" I felt so alone, so ashamed, so defeated. But I didn't have to feel that way! Jesus says, "The HS is there with you in those moments. He'll bring conviction. You share the Good News. Let Him open blind eyes."

APP to lost: We *know* this might sound like gibberish to you: "A really kind and surprisingly wise Jewish carpenter was executed in Jerusalem 2000 years ago, and because of that the whole world will be wonderful beyond imagination some day." We know that sounds crazy. We know it takes faith to believe it. But we repeat it anyway, knowing it sounds strange, because God has promised to do it. And maybe, just maybe, He'll do it in you today.

#### The Holy Spirit GUIDES into All the Truth

**vv12-13** *I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup> When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*

v13 "guide you into all truth." This is NOT a verse about individual guidance for Christians in their daily decisions. There's a definite article: "all THE truth" – a set body of doctrine with boundaries to it.

It's a ministry uniquely promised to the apostles – those who had "been with Jesus from the beginning" (15:27), those who had heard Jesus' original teachings so the HS could "bring to their remembrance all He said" (14:26). When did this happen? Primarily when the HS revealed God's truth to these apostles by special revelation – a supernatural activity, unveiling truth:

**Ephesians 3:1-5** *For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles- <sup>2</sup> assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, <sup>3</sup> how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. <sup>4</sup> When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, <sup>5</sup> which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.*

vv13-14 “he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak / he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” Just as Jesus never spoke or acted on His own initiative (cf. 5:19-20, 7:16-18, 8:26-29, etc.) but instead did exactly what the Father gave him to say and do, so the Spirit speaks only what he hears from Jesus. Here’s the point of that: The HS speaks from the same source of truth as Jesus.

APP: You can’t pit the Spirit’s revelation (i.e., the apostolic writings) against Jesus’ sayings. What the Spirit revealed to the apostles under inspiration, He revealed to them only after He received it from the Son. Some people say they accept what Jesus said but not Paul. The obvious problem with that is, Jesus and Paul share precisely the same source of truth.

**1 Cor 14:37** *The things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.*

NOTE: “Red letter” editions of the Bible get this verse wrong. Jesus’ words are not more authoritative than the other words. That is precisely the point Jesus is clarifying in this verse.

v13 “things to come” = prophetic revelation. Over 20% of NT statements are prophetic; only 2 books (Philemon, 3 John) report no prophetic statements; some books are largely given over to prophetic revelation (2 Peter, 2 Thes). Subject? mostly future judgment & the glory of Christ’s return.

APP: Helpful to you because now you have all the truth about Jesus... and He still guides you into full understanding of all that truth about Jesus. So much greater than they understood when they were with Him.

vv14-15 Declare the truth about Jesus.

**vv14-15** *He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup> All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

Christ is the primary subject matter of everything the HS reveals. What’s this book all about? It’s about Jesus. Practical matters are discussed but all are brought up 1) secondarily (never brought up first, only after extensive doctrinal teaching) and 2) derivatively (drawing out implications from Christ and the cross).

APP: No matter what your needs, to see Jesus as your all-sufficient Savior is what you most need! The Spirit loves to reveal Jesus. He

showcases Jesus. He treasures Jesus and influences us to do the same. Primary attention to Jesus, not to your obedience, doctrine... Jesus.

Saddle Ridge Hoard – Feb 2013, a California couple was strolling along a trail they had walked for years on their property. Noticing a half-buried, rusty can in the shadow of an old tree, the woman stopped to poke around with a stick. Inside was a stash of dirty metal disks, which a little cleaning revealed to be uncirculated, 19<sup>th</sup> century, U.S. gold coins. In all, the couple found eight cans in the hoard, containing 1,427 coins all dating from 1847 to 1894. The face value is \$27,980; but because the coins are in pristine condition, experts have estimated their present-day value to be around \$10 million. Largest discovery of buried gold coins in American history.

That’s what the HS loves to do with Jesus!

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