

The Work of the Holy Spirit

John 16:5-15

by Leon Barnes

Imagine yourself as one of those eleven men around Jesus. They have staked their whole lives on Him. Now Jesus says, "I am going away to Him who sent Me." The loneliness, fear, and doubt that overwhelmed their minds must have been staggering. "Sorrow filled their hearts," the text says. It is then that Jesus made one of the most remarkable statements ever made. He said, "It is to your advantage that I go away" (16:7).

He is the Messiah. He has taught greater lessons than anyone else had ever dreamed. He had cured the incurables; He had loved the unlovable—He had been their Counselor, their Lord and Friend. How can it possibly be an advantage for Him to go away? His answer was this, "If I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." With all His power, Jesus was limited on earth. He could only be at one place at a time. Teaching at this place, He was unheard in other places. Healing here, men were dying unhealed in other places. With His death and the coming of the Holy Spirit the limitation was removed (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5).

"And He, when He comes, . . ." Jesus says. The coming of the Holy Spirit was definite. His general work as a helper or counselor was already revealed. Now Jesus launched into a more detailed explanation of what the Holy Spirit was to do when He would come. Here is Jesus' declaration of the work of the Spirit.

I. HIS WORK TO THE WORLD (16:8-11)

He will convict or convince the world. *Convict* is the word used of an attorney cross-examining a witness or an opponent in an argument. It is to cross-examine until a man sees and admits his error. It also can have the

meaning of convincing one to change his action or behavior.

He will convict the world of sin. Unbelief can cause one to commit the greatest acts of sin without knowing they are doing anything wrong. Remember Saul of Tarsus and the crucifiers of Jesus. The gravest sin of all is lack of faith in Jesus.

He will convict the world of righteousness. Jesus epitomized righteousness; He embodied it. Righteousness is only possible now through a personal relationship with Him (Philippians 3:7-10). The Spirit's work then is to call the world back to righteousness.

He will convict the world of judgment (cf. Acts 24:25). "The ruler of this world is judged," Jesus said (cf. 12:31). This is Satan. He is overthrown by the cross and the resurrection of Jesus. The Holy Spirit warns the world of the coming judgment, for all need to repent (Acts 17:30, 31).

II. HIS WORK TO THE APOSTLES (16:12, 13)

Christ's work of teaching and preparing these men for their mission to carry the gospel to the world, to write down the revelation, and to build up the church was incomplete. The work would be carried to fulfillment by the Holy Spirit. Jesus affirmed, "He will guide you into all truth." (Cf. 1 Corinthians 2:10-13.) The result is a revelation we can read and understand (Ephesians 3:3-5). It is a complete revelation providing all needed information (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Jesus said, "He will not speak on His own initiative." It would not be a self-made message. He will speak what He hears from God. "He will disclose to you what is to come," Jesus said. (Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:22-26; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10.)

III. HIS WORK TO CHRISTIANS (16:14, 15)

Jesus then said, "He will glorify Me" (cf. 15:26). He makes of us witnesses of Christ (15:27).

CONCLUSION

The Spirit of God today works to make you right with God. Will you accept the convicting and convincing of the Spirit to make your life right?

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