

John 16:1-15

¹ "I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. ² 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.

1,2 Jesus continues His warning from the last chapter. He warned them of the world's hatred so that when it happens, they would not be discouraged and fall away. He warned of religious persecution. The world will hate them, and the world includes the religious system. They will be denied access to the temple and synagogues. They will even be put to death, and the ones killing them will think they are serving God. How twisted the mind can become when it is not under the influence of the Holy Spirit (John 3:6).

Religion does not mean a relationship with God. Religion is often completely contrary to a true relationship with God. Not long after Jesus said these things, James would be martyred, then Stephen, then others, hundreds and then thousands. Today Islamic fundamentalists think they are serving Allah when they kill Christians. Hindus in the Indian state of Orissa think they are serving the gods when they kill Christians. Jesus' words are coming to pass now more than ever.

³ And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. ⁴ But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you. "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.

3,4 They do not know what they are doing (Luke 23:34). They do not really know God or Jesus, or they would love and not hate. We should not be surprised as our country changes, as persecution comes, and as we are slandered. Jesus knew it would come after His ascension. As the end of this age comes it will only increase (2 Timothy 3:12,13). Jesus' words should prepare our hearts as they prepared the hearts of His disciples to stand firm, even unto death. Rejoice and be glad for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Matthew 5:12). Are you in the vine? You will not take a stand for righteousness unless you are in the vine. Only a real relationship of love with your Savior will enable you to face the hatred, for it is in that relationship that we receive the righteousness of Christ.

⁵ But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

5,6 I would have been filled with grief too. Would you? But when we have the Holy Spirit residing in us, it is truly better than Jesus' physical presence. The Holy Spirit helps change our hearts. He is with us wherever we go. The physical presence of Jesus could not do that. It is better to live today than to have lived during Jesus' ministry (John 7:39). Jesus goes on to explain why.

⁷ 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. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

7-11 The Holy Spirit can convict the heart and bring change. When the priests saw Jesus do things, they had intellectual arguments about whether He should have said what He did or have healed on the Sabbath and numerous other legal issues (John 9:16). Their eyes got in the way of seeing His heart. The Holy Spirit helps us see Jesus' heart. You will notice in Acts 6, after the coming of the Holy Spirit, a great number of priests converted to the faith (Acts 6:7). That is because the Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin. This does not mean that before Pentecost there was no conviction. The Spirit would come upon people for a time. People still had their conscience. What has changed is conviction regarding who Jesus is and what He accomplished. For those who will receive that conviction, repent, and believe, there is also now the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, His continued abiding presence.

⁹ This is the big one. When people testify of the life of Jesus, it should convict the hearer of unbelief. The Greek word to convict or reprove was used in the secular world as cross-examination. It is to convince a person of the weakness of their case. It reproves them for their refusal to accept Jesus. Everyone is challenged for rejecting His claims. There is no ambiguity in the claims of Jesus. Unlike all other religious leaders, Jesus makes clear and certain claims of being the image of the invisible God (John 14:9), the only way to God (John 14:6), and to even be Life itself! The Holy Spirit confronts the heart of every person and convicts him or her of not accepting the truth of who Jesus is. Everyone will either believe in Jesus or be found guilty of refusing to believe (John 8:24).

As I read this passage, I thought of a young man who said he read the Bible and thought it was a bunch of fairy tales. He did not know how anyone could believe it. Yet, this verse tells us that the Holy Spirit will convict Him of unbelief. He has determined that he has reached a logical conclusion, but in the Spirit's good time, he will be convicted.

¹⁰ As we testify to the life of Jesus, we are testifying of how man is supposed to live. His righteous life is our example, an example that we fall so short of. No matter how good a life you live, we all fall way short of the life of Jesus (Philippians 3:9). Though we can see Him no longer, the testimony of Jesus still convicts the world of righteousness. Jesus ascended in the site of numerous witnesses (Acts 1:9). The resurrection and ascension prove He was completely righteous.

¹¹ Because of Jesus' victorious life as a man, He showed what man could be and refuted the prince of this world's claims over man. Jesus paid the judgment for sin in full so that the prince of this world cannot lay claim to those who have faith in Jesus' work on the cross. If we follow the evil one, we should be convicted. If we give in to his offer of this world in exchange for worshiping Him, we are condemned with him (Matthew 4:8,9).

12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 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.

12,13 The disciples could not possibly have taken in or been able to endure all that they needed to hear. That is another function of the Spirit. He will guide us, or lead the way, into all truth. What is not recorded of Jesus' words that would speak truth into our situations, the Spirit will be faithful to teach us. We cannot bear it all now either. That is why He lives with us to help us through the many situations of life (Psalm 143:10). Greater spiritual truth means greater freedom (John 8:36). Are you letting Him guide you into all truth (Psalm 25:4,5)? If the answer to your need is not clearly in God's word, do you go to Him and ask for His revelation (1 Corinthians 2:9,10)? Do you then expect an answer? Do you really believe these words of Jesus? And if you do not have a relationship with the Spirit, remember these words of Jesus, "Ask and it will be given to you" (Matthew 7:7). The Father is waiting for you to ask. He wants to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask (Luke 11:13).

God is faithful and will have the Holy Spirit speak to us the words of warning or of blessing that is soon to come when we need it. The warnings prepare our hearts for the hardship and encourage us that it is all within God's plan. The encouragement of blessings to come often helps us have faith to endure the hardships of the present (Hebrews 12:2). This has nothing to do with fortune telling or predicting the future, but it has everything to do with strengthening our hearts for service to our King.

14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

14,15 The Spirit reveals Jesus to us. He leads us to salvation through repentance of our unbelief. He directs our lives daily with the truths that come from Jesus. He continues to bring glory to Jesus by revealing more of Him to us (2 Corinthians 3:18). Are you allowing Him to do all of that in you? Does Jesus mean more to you today than in the past, or have you not been allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal more of Jesus to you?

The answer to your every need is found in one of those activities of the Holy Spirit. Whether you are depressed, despondent, or despairing, the Holy Spirit is the answer. In the good times and difficult times, in celebration and in pain, the Holy Spirit will minister to you exactly what you need. He takes from Jesus who has received everything from God and shows you what you need. His presence in you is all you need for illumination and regeneration. Thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen?

With the gift of the Spirit, those ordinary disciples would go on to do extraordinary things, things that they had seen in Jesus' life. Though you and I are just ordinary disciples as well, we have the same gift, the Holy Spirit. If we will yield to Him, we, also, will do extraordinary things to bring glory to the Son (2 Thessalonians 2:14). We will have an increasingly greater revelation of Jesus. Jesus described the presence of

the Spirit to be like a well of living water springing up within us (John 7:38,39). Are you experiencing Him like that?

Questions

What is the primary work of the Spirit?

How does the Spirit testify to you of Jesus?

How do we testify of Jesus?

Discuss the three convictions the Spirit brings?

How is the Spirit's work different after Pentecost?

What is the function of the Spirit described in vs 12-13?

What will be the results of the Spirit living in us?