

The Convicting Ministry of the Spirit

John 16:5-11

Part Two

Having reasonable expectations in respect to the things that we deem important is obviously very significant. If we don't have reasonable expectations we can very easily become disillusioned. And this certainly would have been especially true for Christ's eleven disciples if they after Christ's departure had, in obedience to Christ's command, gone into the world with the Gospel message and had expected the world to receive them with open arms. But this was not their expectation. It was not their expectation because of what Christ shared with His disciples in **John 16:1-11**.

In these particular verses, which we began to examine last week, Christ shared very specifically what they should expect from the world.

Last week we considered the very first thing that Christ wanted them to expect in **John 16:1-4**. And what was that?

This is what He wanted them to expect. Christ wanted His disciples after His departure to expect mistreatment by the world (John 16:1-4). This is what He wanted them to expect.

Ultimately what this meant for His disciples as well as for us as we seek, in obedience to Christ, to take the gospel message into the world was this: Not only will we suffer the normal difficulties that everyone else in this world suffers but we will all suffer an additional difficulty. We will suffer mistreatment by the world.

Coming to Christ and by faith embracing Him as our Lord and Savior is a beautiful thing since it allows us to enter into a sweet communion with God which we can, if we so choose, enjoy everyday of our lives until that day we He calls us home to that place that He is preparing for us in glory where there will be no more tears, sorrow, pain, or death. But until that time you might as well buckle your seatbelt because the way to glory will not be an easy ride. There will be trouble and lots of it.

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But we are not yet done. There is a second thing that Christ wanted His disciples to expect as they went into the world with His message and this was not so much to protect them from disillusionment but rather to encourage them. So what is this second thing that Christ wanted His disciples to expect?

Christ wanted His disciples after His departure to expect that when the Spirit came that He would help them in their ministry by convicting this world of certain things (John 16:5-11). We see this in **John 16:5-11**.

So let me read this passage for you. **“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. (7) But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. (8) And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; (9) concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; (10) and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; (11) and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”**

My hope for this morning as we examine this passage is that this passage will complement what we have already learned. In other words, even though we should expect mistreatment as we go into this world we should also expect a certain measure of success even in the midst of all the hardship that might come to us in terms of the mission He has given us. I would hope that as we put these two expectations that He shared with His disciples in **John 16:1-11** together that we might have a balanced view of what we should expect and that this balanced view might not only keep us from being disillusioned but also encourage us as well.

So let us now begin to examine **John 16:5-11** and consider this measured success that He wanted His disciples to expect based on the future convicting ministry of the Spirit.

So let us begin by looking at **John 16:5**. Let me read this verse for you **“But now I am going to Him who sent Me [there it is once again Jesus referring to His departure but then He drops this on them]; and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’”** Is that true? Of course it’s true. If it were not true

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then Jesus would not have said it. But how do we reconcile this with John 13:36 and John 14:5? What do I mean by this?

Let us first of all consider **John 13:36**. What did it say? “**Simon Peter** [after Jesus had disclosed to His disciples that He was going away and that they would not be able, at least at this point in time to follow Him] **said to Him, ‘Lord, where are You going?’**” Now doesn’t this seem to conflict with what Jesus said in **John 16:5** when He said, “**and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’**” It certainly seems to!

But now let me read you another verse. Let me read for you **John 14:5**. What does it say? “**Thomas** [after Jesus had just told His disciples that He would be going away in order to prepare a place for them in His Father’s house asked the following questions] **said to Him, ‘Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?’**” Now certainly Thomas did not specifically ask Jesus where are you going but certainly He did everything but that.

So how can we reconcile **John 13:36** and **John 14:5** with **John 16:5** when Jesus told His disciples that none of them were asking Him where He was going?

This is what I believe He meant. When Jesus said that none of them were asking Him where He was going He was not talking about past questions but the lack of present questions concerning His departure (John 16:5). This is what He was talking about.

The disciples had asked a certain few questions earlier such as John 13:35 and John 14:5 and Christ had responded. But obviously Christ felt by His statement here in John 16:5 that their questions about where He was He going were woefully lacking and needed to be followed up by many more questions which apparently the disciples had no interest in pursuing since they apparently had stopped asking questions which led Christ to say to His disciples “**and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’**”

So why had that happened? Why had they stopped asking questions related to where He was going? Let me read for you **verse 6**. “**But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.**”

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Christ's disciples were not presently pursuing the questions related to His departure because sorrow had filled their hearts (John 16:6).

Is this how Christ wanted His disciples to live? Is this the way He wants us to live? And I believe that the answer would have to be no! Certainly this is not the way the Lord would want us to live.

When sorrow fills a person's heart that sorrow will control the person whose heart that sorrow fills. And this is something that we as a disciples of Christ cannot allow to happen. Nothing and no one should ever control us other than Christ. But this is exactly what had happened here to Christ's disciples. And because they had allowed this to happen they had ceased asking the questions related to His departure that they should have been asking. So what is Christ going to do about this?

Let me now read for you **John 16:7**. What does it say? **“But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.”** So what did Jesus seek to do here according to this verse? Jesus in John 16:7 sought to help His disciples overcome the sorrow that had filled their hearts by changing their focus from the pain associated with His departure to its gain.

And what exactly would that gain be? The gain of Christ's departure was that after He returned to His Father He would send to them the Holy Spirit (John 16:7). The coming of the Spirit would be their gain and that of course could not take place until after He left them.

So there you go. Sometimes in life we cannot have our cake and eat it too! And this was the case here with His disciples. There was no way that Christ could remain with them and they at the same time enjoy the blessings associated with the coming of the Holy Spirit.

This is something that is very important for us to understand. Christ has promised us that all things work together for good to them that love God and are called according to His purpose and that even includes painful things (Romans 8:28).

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This is an easy truth for Christians to give lip service but we will only know if we truly believe this truth when we are placed into a situation that is extremely painful and we do not have any idea how anything good could possibly come from it. Hopefully when we are given the opportunity to have our faith tested in this way, our faith will be found to be pure and precious in the sight of God.

So were the disciples, in light of Christ's departure, in pain? Absolutely! They were in incredible pain. The Apostle John tells us "sorrow had filled their hearts." And what was Christ's solution for them? Christ's solution was for them to change their focus from the pain associated with His departure to the gain. And what was that gain? The coming of the Spirit whom Christ would send to them after His departure was the gain.

So what exactly did Christ tell His disciples that the Spirit would do after He sent the Spirit to them? Christ told His disciples that after He sent the Spirit to them, the Spirit would convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). Isn't this exactly what He said in **John 16:8**? Let me read for you **John 16:8**. "**And He, when He [the helper or the Holy Spirit] comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment.**"

So how would the Spirit's ministry of convicting the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment help the disciples? The Spirit's convicting ministry would guarantee the disciples that as they in the future went into the world with the gospel of Christ that they in fact would bear some measure of fruit. This is what it meant.

In other words, it meant that in the future when the disciples of Christ went into the world with the gospel of Christ they should not only expect mistreatment but also success. So what did Jesus mean when He told His disciples that the Spirit when He came would convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment?

When Jesus said that the Spirit would convict the world concerning sin He meant that He would convict the world of its rejection of Jesus (John 16:9).

And where do we see this? Let me read for you **John 16:9**. "**Concerning sin, because [what?] they do not believe in Me.**"

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This conviction in regard to sin naturally operates in two ways. It will crush some hearts so that they will be frightened at their unbelief and cry out like the 3,000 at Pentecost, “**Brethren, what shall we do?**” as we see in **Acts 2:37** or it will further harden them until they ultimately perish.

This is what Christ meant when He said that the Spirit when He came would convict the world of sin.

But this is not the only thing that He said the Spirit would convict the world of. He also said that the Spirit would convict the world concerning righteousness.

What did Jesus mean when He told His disciples that the Spirit when He came would convict the world concerning righteousness? When Jesus said that the Spirit would convict the world concerning righteousness He was speaking His own righteousness confirmed through His resurrection from the dead (John 16:10).

Let me read for you **John 16:10**. “**And concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me.**”

The world might seek righteousness by some other means other than Christ but there is no righteousness available to anyone apart from Christ and that certainly should be obvious in light of the fact that He was proven to be the spotless Lamb of God when He was raised from the grave victorious over both sin and death.

So what did Jesus mean when He said that the Spirit would convict the world concerning righteousness? When Jesus said that the Spirit would convict the world concerning righteousness He was speaking of His own righteousness confirmed through His resurrection.

But again this is not the last thing that He said the Spirit would convict the world of. He also said that the Spirit would convict the world of judgment. So what did Jesus mean when He told His disciples that the Spirit when He came would convict the world concerning judgment?

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When Jesus said that the Spirit would convict the world concerning judgment He was referring to the judgment of the ruler of this world that He accomplished at the cross (John 16:11).

Let me read for you **John 16:11. “And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”**

Notice that Jesus spoke of the ruler of the world as already having been judged when He spoke to His disciples. He spoke to them in this way because His own death and resurrection, which pronounced the final judgment on the devil, were already at hand, and as certain as though they had already been completed. And of course nothing has changed even today.

Satan stands even now in light of Christ’s work on the cross as judged and is only waiting for the final execution of his sentence when he will be tossed into Lake of Fire where all those who have chosen to reject Christ and to remain subject to the rule of Satan will inevitably find themselves as well.

So should we expect only mistreatment when we go into the world with the gospel of Christ? No! We should also expect some measure of success because of the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit who has been sent to us in order to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

This expectation should help us to relax as we go into this world with the gospel. But why? It should help us to relax first of all because we know even though we can expect to a certain degree mistreatment as we go into the world we can also expect to a certain measure of success. And secondly the expectation of the Spirit’s convicting ministry should help us relax because we should then know that it is not our work to convict the world of these things but rather it is the work of the Spirit alone and of course this is extremely liberating and will keep me from being unpleasant when I am sharing with someone and second guessing myself after I have shared.

So let me ask you this question. Do you in fact believe that it is the work of the Spirit to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment? If you do then I would encourage to relax and go about your work of sharing the gospel of Christ as best you can in a world that will not be particularly enthusiastic about embracing the gospel message but neither will the world be totally able to resist it either because of the fact that the Holy Spirit will

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in fact convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. And this brings us to our prayer.

May we by the grace of God know that even though we may be mistreated by the world that the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit will assure us that we will bear fruit.