

The Helper Convicts | The Spirit in the World (John 16.8-11)

Intro: The “spirit” of the world

Last week, we discussed what the God the Holy Spirit **is in us**. Today, we want to consider what the Holy Spirit is doing **in the world**. It is important to understand what the Bible usually means when it says “the world.” Culture is all of the beliefs, traditions, inventions, and practices that constitute human civilization. No part of culture is entirely morally and spiritually neutral, because every part of culture is broken. Broken cultures still contain the influences of God’s image and likeness imprinted upon people but it is always marred and bent away from God’s glory by sin. **This bent aspect of culture is called the “world” throughout the Scriptures when it is not talking about the world as in all of earth/creation.**

The Bible has much to say about the “world” in rebellion. According to **the Apostle John**, “the world” is the manifestation of the lust of our flesh, lust of our eyes, and the boastful pride of life. We are commanded to not love this world and we are promised that the world will hate us as it did Jesus. **The Apostle James** tells us that part of our religious duty is to keep ourselves from being polluted by this world and not become friends with this world lest we make ourselves enemies of God. **The Apostle Peter** commands that we be alive to Christ and dead to the sinful temptations in this world that we might avoid the corruption that worldly desires bring. And finally, **the Apostle Paul** condemns the world as a source of saving wisdom for God’s people, emphatically proclaiming that the world and all of its collective wisdom does not know God because it is filled with folly that too many believe is wisdom.

Before anyone is in Christ, everyone is in the world. But by grace, through faith in Jesus, we are saved out of the world. Once God transforms our heart, we are no longer of this world. By the Spirit of God, we are immediately transferred from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of light. In a moment, we become citizens of the eternal Kingdom completely unlike this world in identity, loyalty, and destiny. **He has done something in us, but He continues doing something in the world through us.**

The Spirit Convicts

The Promised Spirit comes to convict the world. The conviction of the Spirit works the same way for all people, leading either to condemnation or captivation by Jesus. In fact, conviction is what makes salvation and glorification possible. 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;** ^{v11} **concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judge (John 16.8-11).** Even though the Bible only uses the word “conviction” to speak about the world, we often hear and talk about the “conviction” of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life—“I feel convicted.” **Because the word “convict” has legal implications, we know that the conviction in the heart of a believer is different than the conviction in the world.**

For the believer, Satan is the accuser, God is the judge, Jesus is our defense attorney, and we’re declared innocent of all charges by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. In Christ, we live as those who are no longer guilty, ashamed, or under condemnation (yet we still struggle with sin.) **So if the Holy Spirit doesn’t convict us, condemn us, or otherwise put us on guilt trips, what does He do?** The Bible says that He helps us in our weakness. He teaches us. He reminds us of what Jesus said. He fights against our flesh. He fills us with joy. He speaks for us. He opens our eyes to see the glory of God in Christ. The Spirit will not let us continue—He compels us to stop dishonoring the Father and, rather, delight in Him. **Conviction for God’s children is sanctification, but conviction for the world is condemnation.**

In the world, however, the convicting power of the Holy Spirit is more than a guilty conscience, fear of punishment, or knowledge of right and wrong. As the Holy Spirit goes forth, working in and through those he has filled, the Spirit proves the world is wrong...about everything. The word *convict* is a translation of the Greek word *elencho*, which means “to convince someone of the truth; to reprove; to accuse, refute, or cross-examine a witness.” **Essentially, the Holy Spirit acts as a prosecuting attorney who EXPOSES evil, ACCUSES evildoers, and CONVINCES people that they need a Savior.**

First, the Spirit proves the world is wrong about sin (v. 9)

Jesus says that the Spirit has three different kinds conviction in the world. **First, the Spirit proves the world is wrong about sin.** In verse 9 we read that the Spirit will convict: ⁹ **concerning sin, because they do not believe in me.** By His word, through the Holy Spirit, God convicts the world of its sin. This is a declaration of guilt—enough to be damned, but it is also revelatory in nature. He reveals that sin is not merely the result of bad upbringing, bad decisions, or bad luck. The Spirit reveals our problem is a bad heart. **Sin is not an external problem, it is an INTERNAL and ETERNAL one.**

Essentially, the Spirit reveals men to be worse than they will ever admit. According to Jesus, they love darkness and hate the light. According to John 3.18-20 ¹⁸ **Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.** ¹⁹ **And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.** ²⁰ **For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works be exposed.** Jesus did not come into the world to condemn it, **but to save it from their sin.** But the world did not believe what He said about their guilt. The law was the first witness, Jesus was the second witness, and the Spirit is final witness against the pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, abuse, violence, and indifference—**case closed, every man hates God at their core and enslaved to their sin.**

Ironically, everyone in the world recognizes there is something “wrong” with the world. Non-believers will even agree that the unjust murder of Jesus epitomizes the brokenness of the world. The world wrongly believe that the problems in their lives are the result of bad bosses, bad spouses, bad parents, bad jobs, bad laws, bad pastors, or just bad luck. Men believe everything is bad, except themselves. The Spirit comes and expose the ugliness of man’s sin. And the world stands condemned, not because of all the bad things they’ve done, but because of the one thing they have not believed. Of all of the horrible sins that we might be able to imagine, **nothing is worse than the sin of unbelief in Jesus whose sacrifice on the cross is designed to show men just how BAD sin is, and how SINFUL they are.**

Second, the Spirit proves the world wrong about righteousness (v.10)

The second thing the Spirit convicts of is righteousness. Verse 10 says the Spirit will convict the world ¹⁰ **concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer;** The Spirit comes not only to reveal to men just how bad they are, but how bad their good is. **The Spirit reveals that the world is not only wrong about the depth of their badness; they are wrong about the quantity and quality of their goodness (righteousness).**

Even if men know they are bad, most wrongly believe that their goodness outweighs whatever bad they might be guilty of. As survey in 2015 revealed that 7-10 Americans believe in heaven as a defined place “where people who have led good lives are eternally rewarded.” In other words, ¾ of Americans believe that they will enter into heaven because they are righteous. As a result, the world has great faith in man’s

ability to fix the brokenness of the world, including their own, because they have misplaced faith in man's morality, virtue, and justice. They wrongly believe that they if they try harder things can be right in the and even right with God. The Spirit exposes the insufficiency of man's efforts to do that. **When people come convinced of their badness, they will turn to their own goodness to save them. But when that goodness fails, they will find a good savior**

Even as the Spirit points people away from the earth as the source of salvation, they seek to find meaning, prosperity, security, and hope in "good" functional savior. Because Jesus is gone, they want a savior they can feel, see, and touch. Some of these saviors or irreligious: career, family, romance. Some of these saviors are religious: moral performance, works of justice, even theology. But men cannot find a Savior good enough—given enough time, all saviors fail. The Spirit reveals the only place that true goodness can be found—where God did what men could never do—the cross. It is in the testimony of the cross, the news of how our sinless Savior, our holy Creator, our humble King, that Spirit reveals the only true measure and source of goodness. **The righteousness that God requires to be in our presence cannot be achieved by men—it can only be received through faith in death and resurrection of Jesus.** The Bible says, there is only one whose life pleased the Father. There is only one mediator between God and men. The Father gave only one name through which men must be saved—Jesus Christ.

Third, the Spirit proves the world wrong regarding their judgement (v.11)

Finally, the Spirit proves the world wrong regarding judgment. **11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.** In his first epistle, the apostle John said that Jesus appeared to destroy the works of the devil. On the cross, the accuser, the tempter, the ruler of this world, was defeated and put to open shame. **The father of lies has fallen, and the false promises of sin have been revealed.**

In the garden, Satan deceived our first parents into trusting themselves more than they trusted God. The Spirit comes and reveals that everyone is wrong, because Satan was wrong in the beginning. Men cannot experience healing, fullness, peace, wholeness, joy apart from God and His word. The Apostle Paul rightly condemns the world as a source of saving wisdom for God's people, emphatically proclaiming that the world and all of its collective wisdom does not know God because it is filled with folly that too many parade as wisdom. **As they do what they believe is right in their own eyes, they tumble to their deaths to the applause of an approving world.**

The Spirit comes and, through Christ, reveals we are self-deceived. What the world judges as wisdom is foolish, and they judge as foolish is wise. **The Spirit points us to the foolishness of the cross which turns the world's value system upside down.** According to the gospel, the key to popularity is humility. The key to power is weakness. They key to prosperity is to give it all away. They key to win is to lose.

The Church as the Spirit's Tool

And how does the Holy Spirit convict the world of these things? Where is such wisdom found? THE CHURCH. Paul writes in Ephesians 3 that God's plan was that **through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (Ephesians 3.10)** **The Church does not exist to judge or save the world, rather, the existence of the Church is the evidence of God's judgment and His salvation.** The Promised Spirit comes to convict the world. The conviction of the Spirit works the same way for all people, leading either to condemnation or captivation by Jesus.

We are not a people who are waiting for others to be convicted, we are the convicted. We WERE the ones who were saved out of the world. As Jesus prayed in John 17, we are the ones saved out of the world by the truth, and sent into the world with the truth. And what is the truth?

1. **I AM WRONG ABOUT MY BADNESS. – I AM WORSE THAN I FEEL.**
2. **I AM WRONG ABOUT MY GOODNESS – I AM WORSE THAN I LOOK.**
3. **I AM WRONG ABOUT MY JUDGEMENT – IT IS WORSE THAN I THINK.**

The world wrongly, and some so-called Christians, assume that the ones in the church are the ones who don't do bad, only do good, and make every right decision. WRONG. The genuine Christians in the church are supposed to be ones who, by the conviction of the Spirit, accept that they are the ones who need help. **The genuine Christians believe we are more sinful than we'll ever admit or know, but more loved and helped than we could ever imagine.** I need Jesus. I need Jesus forgiveness, I need his righteousness, and his wisdom, yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

We who live by the Spirit are the ones, therefore agree with Him--confessing our sins, repudiating our goodness, and boasting in Jesus. **What is convicting IN US becomes compelling TO THE WORLD..**

Conclusion | Conviction towards Glorification

What begins with conviction about Christ leads to glorification of Christ. Jesus ends this passage saying::
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. ¹⁴ **He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.** What is the Spirit doing in the world? He convicts me, crushes me, and then compels me. He maximizes my sin, minimizes my goodness, revolutionize my judgment so that, through my life and my words, others might realize their own salvation in Jesus Christ. Conviction is what makes glorification possible.

When the Spirit of God fell on his disciples in Acts 2, Peter stood and gave his first sermon. He preached three things. God is good. You are bad. And your judgment is so wrong, you killed God's own Son—the one who came to save. **But God, Peter says, raised Him up and He has sent His Spirit to save you from your badness—the bible says they were "cut to the heart". So, he ends with sermon with this invitation:** "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself...Save yourselves from this crooked generation."