

Pentecost Sunday Sermon June 4, 2017

Sermon Text: John 16: 5-11

Sermon Theme: The Work of the Holy Spirit is Good.

1. To Convict the World

2. To Bring People to Faith

⁵ “Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. ⁷ But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; ¹⁰ in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

If there were one person that you could eat lunch with who would it be? There are many different people we could choose from. Some choose important people from history, others family members, still others a childhood hero. None of these are bad answers, but what about Jesus. Wouldn't it be great to sit down and eat lunch with Jesus?

Just think about it. We could sit across the table from him and ask him all the questions we have ever wondered about the Bible. He could tell us some stories about himself or the disciples. He could tell us what heaven is really like. It would be pretty neat to sit down and eat lunch with Jesus.

But there would be a problem. In those few minutes at the table, you would probably think up many more things to ask Jesus. The time would go by too quickly. Maybe you would order another dessert just to make the time last a little longer. But then, it would all be over and you would be left with a mixture of sadness and happiness.

The fact is, no amount of time would be enough to spend with Jesus. Jesus' disciples and followers had spent years with him and they could not stand to let him go either. They wanted him to stay, to be with them forever. They did not want anything else replacing Jesus in their life.

God has other plans for Jesus after he rose from the dead and they didn't include Jesus staying on earth. Jesus would return to his heavenly Father so that his heavenly work would begin.

But God would not leave his people alone. He had plans to send something special that would lead and teach and guide the disciples and the followers of Jesus in as wonderful a way as Jesus had. God would send the Holy Spirit to do his work in the hearts of the world. That work of the Holy Spirit is good and must happen. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin and then leads people to faith in Jesus.

As Jesus and his disciples sat around the table on Maundy Thursday evening, he tried to prepare them for a time when he would not be with them. Jesus talked about a road that he must travel, a road of suffering that they could not follow on. He spoke of his heavenly work of preparing a place for all who believe. Today's text is a continuation of this Maundy Thursday sermon where he is trying to build his disciples up in faith. He wants them to feel joy that his earthly work is drawing to a conclusion. But instead of feeling joy at the news that their salvation was just a few hours away, they feel only sadness because all they hear is that Jesus is leaving.

Where are their minds as Jesus is talking to them? Are they trying to grasp the truths he is speaking to them? Are they struggling with the immensity of Scripture being fulfilled? Are they curious as to what he means?

Any of those thoughts would have been good, but instead, Jesus shows us that their minds are not on him, their minds are on only on themselves. They are only thinking about how Jesus leaving will affect them.

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Jesus asks them to look beyond their selfish sadness to see that his leaving will be a good thing. Without him leaving, they would never turn the page on the next chapter of Jesus' plan to bring the Gospel to the world.

When Jesus walked the earth, everything was Jesus-centric. The disciples looked to Jesus as their preacher and teacher. They asked him questions and he answered. The people flocked to see Jesus, not to listen to the disciples.

The disciples were learners, maybe even apprentices, but they were not masters and teachers. Jesus was the master. If Jesus stayed on the earth, his disciples would always be coming back to him for everything. They would never go far from their master as Jesus needed them to do.

Jesus must go. His work on earth was not to spread his message to the ends of the earth, it was to take away the sins of the earth and this he had done. Jesus must go, so that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to work faith in the hearts of people through the Gospel wherever it was preached.

The coming of the Holy Spirit would mean that the Gospel was mobile. It would go out with any and all people who believe in Jesus. There would be no need for one permanent physical location to come to, because the Holy Spirit would be with all those apostles, missionaries and all others who believe in his Word, guiding them and their teaching as they shared it with others..

The giving of the Holy Spirit is good and the work the Holy Spirit does is good. The Holy Spirit works and builds faith in Jesus. But before the Holy Spirit can work faith, he must first convict us of our sin. This is often called the strange work of the Holy Spirit. **When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; ¹⁰ in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.**

A little child who wanders into the street does not know they are in danger. They do not appreciate when mom or dad comes running out and picks them up moments before the car come to a screeching halt right where they were standing. They have no idea why they are getting yelled at. They cry because they are scared. They don't know they have reason to happy, because they didn't know they needed to be saved.

On the other hand, when we know we are in danger, we are overjoyed when someone saves us. The 155 people on Flight 1549 knew they were in danger as their plane descended closer and closer to the Hudson River in New York. They were overjoyed when Captain Chesley Sullenberger landed his airplane safely on the Hudson River. They knew the danger they were in and were overjoyed when Captain Sully saved them.

Before Jesus and the salvation he brings means anything to us, we must understand the eternal danger we are in because of sin and realize we need a Savior.

The Holy Spirit convicts everyone in the world of sin. The Holy Spirit shows us the evidence of the sin our lives. That evidence can do one of two things. The weight of that sin, the mountain of evidence against us, can crush us and drive us to our knees in repentance where we call out "What must I do to be saved." Or it can harden us and confirm us in our unbelief as we try to argue our way around God's evidence.

And argue we often do. We stand toe to toe with God and we want to discuss with him his perfect standard of Law. We want to try to find loopholes in that Law. I didn't know that was a sin, I didn't think that applied in my situation, I had a good reason for it, That's not a sin anymore, or I was right to do it.

No matter what our argument, no matter if we want to believe it or not, no matter if we believe there is a God in heaven, the Holy Spirit convicts everyone of their sinfulness. He convicts us when our lack of repentance shows our trust in self and our lack of trust in Jesus.

The Holy Spirit convicts us concerning our own righteousness. Part of our argument with God is that we want to make the rules. If we are in charge of making the rules of sin, it is easy to overlook our own sins in order make ourselves more righteous. The Holy Spirit convicts us in this as well. It is not a matter of a few small things. We are not righteous in many things, we have failed to live up to God's Law in many ways.

There is only one who is righteous and that is Jesus. The Father has proved Jesus' righteousness by welcoming his Son back into his heavenly home in this glorious and amazing way. The Father is pleased not with us and our righteousness, but with the work of his Son and righteousness that he gives to us.

There is no other way to heaven, than through Jesus. Money, success, personal gain, kings, other gods are judged as nothing. We are convicted of our unbelief if we trust in any of them.

This does sound strange to us that the Holy Spirit has to convict us of our sin before he can work faith. But it only when we see the consequences of sin, death and hell, looming in front of us that we realize that we need a Savior. It is then that the Holy Spirit creates and work faith in our repentant hearts.

The Holy Spirit guides us to see that our only help and salvation lies in the one who is speaking these words to us this morning. The Holy Spirit shows us that our sins are forgiven. There is no need to argue about sin, those who repent are forgiven freely. The Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts to believe that it is not our righteousness that saves us, it is only through Jesus blood and righteousness that the Father calls us his own. The Holy Spirit creates and works that faith in the one who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who is even now sitting on the throne of heaven in all of his glory.

The disciples wanted Jesus to stay. But his earthly work was over. Now the work of spreading that Gospel needed to be done. The blessing of the Holy Spirit is wonderful. The Holy Spirit lives and works saving faith in our hearts to turn us from sin and to see the blessing of salvation that we have in Jesus. Then, in thanks to Jesus we will go out and share that Gospel with others. Amen