

Things of the Spirit - Conviction

One of the amazing things about the Holy Spirit is that no one is outside of His reach. No matter how they view Him, no matter if they believe in Him or not, the Holy Spirit is at work in their lives.....they just don't know it.

This is a reminder of the love of God. That even people who reject Him and think He's a phony or even that He's not necessary....even those people, He is chasing after. His Spirit is working on their heart....trying to draw them to Jesus!

The very first thing the Holy Spirit does in a person's life is not gifts, freedom, unity, new life, or comfort.....the first thing the Holy Spirit does in a person's life is conviction.

To convict is to convince or expose. Keep that in mind as we read John 16.

John 16:8-11 (NKJV)

And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

This is Jesus speaking not long before He is betrayed and arrested. Just before this verse is when He tells the disciples that it's good that He goes away because if He does, then He can send the Holy Spirit, the Helper, to them.

If you remember a few weeks back when we looked at the comfort of the Spirit, this word for Helper or Comforter is parakletos (parrrr-rock-lay-taas) - this means "called to one's side, especially called to one's aid".

Church, He has come! The Holy Spirit has come!

The Holy Spirit is not just present....He's present to HELP YOU! He's here to walk WITH every single believer....

Then here in v8 Jesus says the Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin!

And all the church people said "Amen".

Conviction is a really good thing. This is not conviction as in a court of law where you are declared guilty by a judge or jury. This is more of being convinced of sin.

The problem with sin is that sometimes we think that sin is not sin. It's not that we don't know better in our hearts. God wrote His law on man's heart....there's something in us that knows right from wrong.....that's not coincidence!

But we convince ourselves that what we are doing is not that bad. It's just a small thing. It's nothing compared to what someone else is doing.

Really we're all doing all right? Right? Isn't that what we tell each other? Because that's what we tell ourselves.

Imagine a doctor in a clean, well lit hospital having the following dialog with a patient: "What seems to be the problem?" The patient replies, "My fingers are great." "Good, but what is wrong with you." "Well, my feet are really feeling fantastic." "Fine, but this is a hospital, what can we do for you?" "Well, let me brag about my legs, I have been walking on them all day!" "Great, but this is a place of healing. Around here, we focus on *what is wrong* so that we can make you fully healthy. Now then, where does it hurt." Now imagine the patient saying: "That isn't very positive, I would rather talk about what is right about me" or "I think I'll find a new hospital. I feel so "sick" here, everyone seems to be so judgmental and faultfinding."

Or, on the contrary, imagine a more needy patient going into a hospital and begging for help for a particular problem, and having the doctor say, "Don't condemn yourself by admitting you have a problem. I don't receive that, brother! Let's focus on the positive. Besides, we were having a cheerful conversation about how great the hospital administrator is... "

The church should function as a *spiritual hospital*. A place for sinners to come and be healed. But more often, in modern Christianity, churches have become places where people are affirmed in their sickness, or worse still where sick people brag about self-wellness.

A few weeks ago we looked at the freedom of the mind that the Holy Spirit can give us. This is a part of that. Why do we come into the place where we can receive healing and say we are well?

Why do we sit in our seat during an altar call knowing full well that we have a need that is unmet? I think we are lacking conviction. Or we are at least denying it or not recognizing it.

The Holy Spirit is here to convince the world of sin.....to expose sin. That the nature of sin is a death sentence and you need Jesus to save you from it!

We don't need the Holy Spirit to make us "feel bad" for sin. we already do.....

We don't need the Holy Spirit to make us fear God's punishment of sin, we already do.....

We don't need the Holy Spirit to make us see what is right or wrong, we already do.....

These are things that God built into every default model. It's not just a feature on the luxury models.....they are basic features that the most basic man or woman has straight from the factory!

When the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, when He convinces a person of their sin, when He exposes what you've tried to keep hidden, we are talking about straight up hatred of that sin.

See our flesh desires to sin. It likes it. It feels good. It's enjoyable. But it's consequence is death.

But we don't think about the consequences when we are sinning! If we did.....we would wouldn't do it.

How do we get this hatred toward our sin.....when we see God's beauty. When we see His holiness and recognize that sin has NO PLACE in His presence. And we have experienced that presence and never want to leave it.

Isaiah 6:5 (NKJV)

So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone!
Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts."

Have you been in the presence of God? If you have, you know there is no sin that compares to the feeling you have when you are with Jesus. You know that that is the place where you feel peace, where nothing else matters. It's your destiny!

It's literally where you were created to be! But your sin will drive you out of that place.

Do you see the beauty of the Lord? Jesus came and died for the consequences of your sin.....it was your sin that drove the nails through His hands and feet. It was your sin that laid the whip on His back and pressed that crown of thorns down on His head.

Don't you HATE that sin? It ruins lives. It's only goal is death and destruction. Sin is evil and it must be cut off and destroyed.

Do you have conviction of your sin? It should lead to repentance. That is you acknowledging it, and turning away from it by turning to Jesus.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit would convict the world of sin because they don't believe in Him....believing in Jesus is placing your confidence and trust in Him.

Do you believe that if you repent of your sin that Jesus will take care of you? I know it may be hard. I know it may cost you relationships, it may cost you money, it may cost you time....but do you trust Jesus?

I gotta say I think Christians have some wrong beliefs. Ever heard that there is no sin that is greater than any other? Ever said that? Me too.

I think there is one sin greater than the rest.....because there is one that has the consequence of eternal damnation.....not believing in Jesus! Not recognizing we have a need for a Savior and that without Him we are spiritually dead and there is NO other way to escape that sentence.

Do you hate the sin that separates you from your Savior?

Romans 12:9 (NKJV)

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

The subtitle here is "Behave Like a Christian".....you could say "Be like Jesus" - hate sin love righteousness!

Do you know there is righteousness in this life?

Here's something I hate....I hate when people make fun of Christians and make jokes about them being "holier than thou" or "high and mighty" or whatever other garbage they spew.

You know what....A person who follows Jesus IS holier than a person who doesn't! And their spiritual position IS high and mighty! Praise God!!!!!!

But it's not self-righteousness. It's not because of anything we've done, it's because of what Jesus has done and it's available to you just as it is to me!

Jesus said the Holy Spirit will convince the world of righteousness, "because I go to My Father and you see Me no more"

When He said "it is finished" on the cross.....IT.....WAS.....FINISHED!

He had paid the price. And the evidence that the payment was accepted is that Jesus was resurrected! He overcame the penalty of the sin that He bore for us....death!

And His time here on the earth after that was not because there was still work to be done for salvation, that was all for our benefit....to know He's alive, to know it will be ok and to wait for the Helper, and to get to work sharing the gospel!

He says you need convincing of righteousness because I'm going to heaven to My Father, I'm outta here! It's a good thing. The debt has been paid. What Jesus came to do has been completed!

Guys, this is going to set some of you free, right here, right now.....

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Many people think that they will never be forgiven for X, Y, or Z. Some of you right now, do not REALLY believe in total forgiveness. You are thinking of human forgiveness. You are being worldly minded.

The sins that you have committed.....they were placed upon Jesus when He was on that cross. The Father treated Jesus as though He committed those sins as He turned away and now if you believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, then then God treats you as if you have only lived the righteous, sinless life of His Son!

You've got to know that He looks at you and He sees someone that is righteous. Someone that is without sin. Someone that IS holier than the sinner. Someone that IS high and mighty because you are seated with Christ in heavenly places!

What God sees when He looks at you, is He sees you as you ought to be.....righteous....in a condition that is acceptable to God....

Somebody praise Jesus!

The third thing the Spirit convicts of is judgment. He will convince the world of judgement.

Starting with the word "Counselor" in John 15:26, Jesus uses terms that are associated with legality. They are all legal terms: SIN means you miss the perfect mark of God's law; Righteousness has to do with being innocent or guiltless; The word for JUDGMENT is associated with the exercise of justice or the proceedings of A TRIAL.

There is a judgment day coming where everyone will give an account. There is a day when Jesus will sit as judge. Unbelievers will be judged for their unbelief, for refusing to believe in the testimony of the Spirit concerning Jesus the Savior, but that is not what Jesus is talking about here. He says: "the prince of this world (SATAN) now stands condemned." At the cross, Satan would be convicted and judged. Satan is slain at the Cross!

So what IS Jesus talking about here for believers? The word we would use to describe it is "liberty." The thing the world will learn by watching Christians is that HERE are people who have

been set free from satan and the bondage of sin and of death by the power of the Spirit and the Living Word. The world will see what it means to be changed from the inside out and to live as Sons of the Living God- no longer bound by sin, but set free through the power of the Cross. We are set free to serve the living God.

Romans 8:1 (NKJV)

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

The Lord Jesus has come into our lives and into our very hearts in order to DIE in order to set us free from all the bondage of the past, and to empower us to live for Him, now and forever, to REMAIN IN CHRIST, sins forgiven, trusting in HIS Righteousness alone.

And so we come to the table of the LORD FORGIVEN and set free! If anyone is in Christ Jesus, He is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come!