

## THE PROMISED HELPER

John 16:4-15

Intro: The disciples were facing a frightening future when Jesus told them His time with them was over.

- He had spent three years with them---preparing them for the greatest work in the world---and this was to be His last evening with them before the crucifixion.
- He had just told them they will be hated by the godless---the irrational---and the religious people in the world---and probably be killed by them---if they do the work He has prepared them to do.
- The world would treat them the same way it treated Him.
- They had every right to be afraid.
- However---earlier in the evening He had told them He wouldn't leave them as orphans.
- He told them that the Father would give them another Helper ---and that He would be with them forever.
- And He had spoken of the Helper a couple of times earlier in the evening.
- He told them the Helper would teach them---and bring to remembrance all He had said to them.
- And that when the Helper came---they would bear witness of Him.
- He continues that thought in our text for today---where we find Him reassuring them that the Helper would come.

### I. THE HELPER WILL COME

John 16:4-7

- ““But these things I have spoken to you, that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.
- ‘But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, “Where are You going?”’
- “But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.
- “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.”’
- Jesus had warned the disciples about the difficulties that lay ahead---because He didn't want them to think He had led them down a primrose path.
- That He had deceived them in any way.
- He wanted them to be able to look back---and recognize that He had indeed warned them about everything they were going through.
- And that it wasn't going to be easy.
- He had tried to make that clear from the very beginning.

- He had not---however---fully revealed to them the intensity of the hatred they would experience earlier---because there was no need at the time.
- As long as He was with them---He would be the focus of most men's hostilities.
- But now that He was leaving---the hatred that had been directed at Him would fall on them.
- And He was leaving---and they knew it.
- He had told them clearly that He was leaving---even though they didn't really understand where He was going.
- Peter and Thomas had both raised the question earlier in the evening---but no one had pressed the issue.
- Just knowing that He was leaving was more than they could bear.
- They didn't want the details.
- They were overwhelmed by the fact that He would no longer be with them.
- But He assured them that it would be to their advantage for Him to leave.
- Because if He left---He would send them the Helper.
- Now---as we've noted---He's already spoken of the Helper.
- And we've determined that the Helper---the Comforter---the Advocate---the Paraclete---the one called alongside---is the Holy Spirit.
- Now Jesus is telling them that He has to leave---before the Spirit can come.
- That's a bit confusing.
- Because we know the Spirit was on the earth---long before man was created.
- In Genesis we find the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters---before breathing into man the breath of life.
- And as Job explained---"The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life." (Job 33:4)
- The word for "spirit" and "breath" is the same word.
- We also have examples of the Spirit empowering men to do God's will---long before the day of Pentecost.
- It was the Spirit of God that gave craftsmen the ability to construct the tabernacle and its furnishings.
- It was the Spirit that empowered the prophets to speak for God.
- And it was the Spirit that anointed Jesus to preach the good news.
- So the Holy Spirit was present before Jesus went away.
- The Spirit of God has always been present on earth.
- His ministry---however---would be greatly expanded after Jesus' departure.

- Rather than work through a select few---He would work through anyone who would allow himself to be cleansed---and made into a fit temple for Him to inhabit.
- And it would be essential for Jesus to go away---before that could happen.
- In fact---it was essential that He die---in order for that to happen.
- Without His death---and the subsequent resurrection and ascension---the Spirit might be able to influence a few---and even empower a few---but He could inhabit no one.
- It's only through the forgiveness of sins---made possible by the atoning death of Christ---that we can become fit vessels for the Spirit of God.
- That was true even of the apostles.
- Even they could not be inhabited by the Spirit---until after Jesus' departure.
- And---perhaps surprisingly--it is far better to be inhabited by the Spirit of God---than to be in the actual presence of a physical Jesus.
- The physical Jesus had been limited to being in only one place at a time.
- And---if He had remained on earth---He would not have been able to commission the apostles as He did.
- “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
- teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)
- For them to fulfill their commission---with His help---He would have to leave.
- The physical Jesus would have to leave---so the Helper---the Spirit of Jesus---could come and be with them to the end of the age.
- And it would be necessary for the Spirit to come---if they were to succeed in fulfilling the Great Commission.

## II. THE HELPER WILL CONVICT John 16:8-11

- ““And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment;
- concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;
- and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me;
- and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”
- It's the Spirit's job to convict the world concerning sin---and righteousness---and judgment.
- Jesus made that very clear---and I think we understand what it means to be brought to conviction concerning sin---righteousness---and judgment.
- It means to be brought to the point of accepting the truth about these things---and responding appropriately to them.

- But how does the Spirit bring about this conviction?
- Some might suggest that the Spirit of God has been set loose to work independently of men to convict people of their sinfulness---their lack of righteousness---and the inevitability of judgment.
- That the Spirit is like a free-floating conscience at work that convicts men of their need to get their lives in order.
- But others would be quick to point out that the Bible makes clear something else is needed.
- That the preaching of the gospel is essential if men are to be brought to God.
- In Romans 10:14 we read:
- “How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”
- But does that mean that the Spirit’s activity in convicting men is limited to the preaching of the gospel?
- That conviction comes solely through the gospel message that is preached.
- It is true that the Spirit gave us the message---and that message is convicting.
- But will that message---in and of itself---cause the world to acknowledge sin---its lack of righteousness---and the coming judgment?
- I don’t think so.
- I think it’s obvious that the Spirit works in conjunction with preaching to bring about conviction.
- That the Spirit takes the spoken message---and drives it into a man’s heart---and there convicts him of his need to respond.
- Just as God is the One who gives the increase after seed has been sown and watered---so is it the Spirit who brings conviction of sin---righteousness---and judgment.
- I’m not able to convince anyone that they are sinful---apart from the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- Because words---in and of themselves---do not have the power to convict anyone of their sin.
- Only the Spirit can do that.
- And no one can even be persuaded to believe in Jesus through a simple presentation of the facts concerning Him.
- Because to believe in Jesus is to acknowledge your need for a Savior---that you are in fact sinful.
- Only the Spirit can convict a man of that fact.
- And understanding this is crucial to the spiritual and mental health of those attempting to lead men to Christ.

- If the convicting of sin were on our shoulders---it would be burden far too heavy to bear.
- Every time someone failed to respond---we'd figure it was our fault---that we didn't do a good enough job.
- Thankfully---we've been relieved of that pressure.
- Our job is to preach.
- The Spirit does the convicting of sin---and of righteousness.
- And it's a really good thing that convicting men of righteousness is not our responsibility.
- Because we could never adequately demonstrate it.
- When Jesus was present on earth---men could see absolute righteousness embodied in Him.
- And He brought them to conviction just by living among them.
- Most didn't like being convicted of their sinfulness in the face of His righteousness.
- But there was no question about what righteousness was---and who did---and did not have it.
- We're not able to convict men of righteousness like that.
- We can't do it---because we don't have it.
- We are called to be light in a dark world---and we must be able to say---"Follow me as I follow Christ."
- But we're not the perfect picture of righteousness.
- Neither our preaching---nor our life---will bring men to conviction concerning righteousness.
- Only the Spirit of God---piercing into the depths of a man's heart and exposing his hidden sinfulness in the light of Christ's perfection---will convict him of the fact that his self-righteousness is but filthy rags before God.
- And that unless something is done about it---he faces the certainty of judgment by that righteous and holy God.
- Judgment---therefore---is the third thing concerning which the Spirit convicts.
- There is no way we can convince anyone that judgment is coming.
- Our finest hellfire and brimstone sermon might scare someone ---but it won't bring conviction any more than a Hollywood horror film.
- Heart-felt life-changing conviction concerning the certainty of judgment comes only from the Spirit of God.
- And He does it by making it clear that sin will not only be judged---but that it has already been judged.
- Satan has lost the war---and the only way to survive future judgment is to get on the winning side---and to do so now.
- I can't convict you of that fact.

- I can't show you Satan in chains.
- I can't even convince you that the current reign of sin in our world is only the dying struggle of a defeated enemy.
- But the Spirit can.
- He can make it so clear that you'll not only prepare for judgment yourself---but you'll do everything in your power to get the message of future judgment to others.
- And you'll do so in the hope that the Spirit can use your efforts as an opening to bring conviction in someone's life.
- Conviction concerning sin---righteousness---and judgment.
- And the Spirit will guide you in those efforts.

### III. THE HELPER WILL GUIDE John 16:12-15

- “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.
- ‘But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.
- ‘He shall glorify Me; and He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you.
- ‘All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you.’”
- Earlier that evening Jesus had said---“The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” (John 14:26)
- He had assured them that the Holy Spirit would teach them---and would help them remember what He had told them.
- Now He tells them why He didn't personally teach them everything they would need to know.
- It would have simply been too much for them to handle at the time.
- But He again assures them that they will know what they need to know---when they need it.
- That the Spirit of Truth would guide them into all truth---and make certain they know everything they would need to know.
- He would amplify and clarify what the Father and Son had already said.
- He would disclose to them whatever else they might need to know---to do what they had been commissioned to do.
- And He would help them apply what had been said to the situations they would be facing.
- The Holy Spirit would speak to them---and through them.
- And the Apostle Peter affirmed this in II Peter 1:20-21.

- “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation,
- for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”
- Indeed---the Scriptures were written by men moved by the Holy Spirit.
- He guided them into all truth.
- And---in conjunction with what He revealed to them---He guides us into all truth today.
- He guides us through the written word---which they were moved to write.
- He guides us through the understanding and enlightenment He gives---as we read that written word of God.
- And He guides us through direct intervention in our thought processes that enables us to know His will in specific situations ---and to speak forth His counsel at the opportune moment.
- James assures us that if we ask for wisdom---it will be given to us.
- And Jesus told the disciples not to be anxious about what to say when brought before rulers and authorities---because the Holy Spirit would teach them in that very hour what they ought to say. (Luke 12:11-12)
- I believe He still does that today.
- I never cease to be amazed at the words I’m given in counsel--- and in preaching---that I know did not come from my own thought processes.
- The Spirit---the Helper---is still in the business of guiding His people.
- And He’s available to every one of us---because in returning to the Father---Jesus has made it possible for each of us to be inhabited by His Spirit.
- And---if we’ve allowed Him to do so---He has convicted us concerning sin---righteousness---and judgment.
- We have repented of sin---we hunger and thirst after righteousness---and we are ready for judgment.
- We may no longer be able to sit at the physical feet of Jesus---but He can now be with us everywhere---all the time.
- He is available to us today in the person of the Holy Spirit---the Helper who has come.
- And without Him we could do nothing.