

**The Word Became Flesh  
(Week 47)  
John 16:7-11, John 3:1-8  
“The Ministry of The Holy Spirit (Part 2)”**

**Introduction**

**“Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don’t go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send Him to you.”** **John 16:7**

As we continue our study of John’s Gospel, we are given a description of the ministry of The Holy Spirit. It is imperative that we always keep the purpose of His mission, the “prime directive” if you will, in focus. The mission of The Holy Spirit here on this earth is to exalt the Name that is above every name. His mission is to glorify Christ. Anything that does not glorify The LORD Jesus is, therefore, not of The Holy Spirit. He has not come to glorify Himself, although He is a co-equal member of the Godhead. And He most certainly has not come to exalt us. But rather, He comes to live with us so that we may also exalt the Name of Jesus.

It is also important for us to understand that The Spirit of God has not come to the *world*.

**“If you love me, you will keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive Him because it doesn’t see Him or know Him. But you do know Him, because He remains with you and will be in you.”** **John 14:15-17**

So, you see, just as Jesus had a physical body, when He walked upon this earth, The Holy Spirit also has come to live in a body. And that body my friends is The Church, The Body of Christ. The Spirit of God isn’t some “thing” that is floating around in the world. He is a person, and He lives within every Believer. He uses The Church of Jesus Christ, to glorify Christ. We, the church, are the means by which The Spirit operates, in order that this world may see a living Christ in us. We are His witnesses.

**“When the Counselor comes, the One I will send to you from the Father —the Spirit of Truth Who proceeds from the Father — He will testify about Me. You also will testify, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”** **John 15:26-27**

So I say again, the “prime directive” of The Holy Sprit is to lift up and exalt the Name of Jesus. And He does that through His body, the Body of Christ, The Church. Last week, we studied three of The Spirit’s ministries. *His Exaltation Ministry* (exalting Christ), *His Exhortation Ministry* (enabling The Church to exalt Christ), and *His Expedient Ministry* (coming to live within every Believer, so that they can become obedient to Christ).

Today, we will examine more components of The Spirit’s ministry upon the earth. But all the while we must keep in mind that everything that He does will be for the sole purpose of bringing glory to Jesus. So, let us look further and see exactly what The Spirit does and how He operates within The Church. Many congregations, and even entire denominations, in the world today, do not have clear understanding of The Spirit’s working within the body of Christ, and for this reason, much false doctrine has found its way into churches. A basic understanding of The Spirit’s mission would eliminate so much of what has, in my view, corrupted the gospel message in our day and time.

The Gospel of John is very clear as to how and why The Spirit operates. And we must also know this so that we can truly hear His voice, when He speaks to us, and not confuse the working of The Spirit with the selfish desires of our flesh. There is a constant struggle going on between the flesh and The Spirit. So we absolutely must be able to distinguish between the two. Today we will see *The Spirit’s Reproving Ministry*, and *His Regeneration Ministry*.

**His Reproving Ministry (John 16:8-11)**

**“When He comes, He will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment: About sin, because they do not believe in Me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see Me; and about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”** **John 16:8-11**

Jesus, in preparation for going to the cross, wanted to reassure His disciples that they would actually be better off when He returned to His Father. For if He did not leave them, then the Counselor would not come to live within them. Just imagine what it would be like if all of us had to travel to Israel to speak with Christ. If He had stayed upon this earth in bodily form, then that would have been the only way that His followers could speak with Him. Imagine the long lines of those waiting just to be able to spend a few minutes with Jesus!

The good news is... since Christ has ascended to His Father and The Spirit has come to live within those who have placed their faith in Him, we can now have constant, un-interrupted communion with Him. Sadly, many Christians do not take advantage of this truth, however, and this is why we see so much wrong within the Church today. Christ *died* to save us, *rose* to give us victory over death, and *returned* to His Father, so that we could be filled with The Spirit and have continuous representation before God’s throne. I would have to agree with Jesus that His Father’s plan was most expedient for us!

As they walked and talked, growing ever closer to the shadow of Calvary’s cross, Jesus gave the disciples further details of The Spirit’s ministry. He told them when The Spirit came to dwell within them, that He would “convict” the world. The word that He uses here in the Greek is “*elencho*”, which means *to reprove or to expose; to bring to light*. Christ told His followers that night that The Spirit would come to them and expose the world. He would convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment (**vs. 8**).

So what does this mean exactly? First, notice that it is not to the world that The Spirit would come, but rather, to the Believers. He told them, **“If I go, I will send Him to you.”** So just how does The Spirit reprove the world? He does it through The Church. Imagine it this way. The world is on trial. The Holy Spirit is the prosecuting attorney, and we have been called as witnesses against the world. What is our evidence? The LORD Jesus. The Spirit uses our testimony about Jesus in order to “read the verdict of the court into evidence”. And what is the verdict? Guilty as charged. The first count of the indictment is unbelief. Jesus says that The Spirit will first convict the world about sin (**vs. 8a**), and then He explains the exact sin to which He refers.

**“...About sin, because they do not believe in Me...”**

**John 16:8a**

The verdict is in, and it is **not** good news for those who have refused to believe in Christ. For you see, the cross was sufficient to forgive *every* sin, but the sin of unbelief shall never be forgiven. To refuse Christ is to *be* guilty. It is absolutely imperative that The Church be a powerful witness to these truths:

1. The wages of sin is death (**Romans 6:23**).
2. Jesus died to forgive sinners (**Romans 5:8**).
3. There can be no forgiveness for those who will not believe in Christ. (**John 16:8**)

**“Anyone who believes in Him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the Name of the One and Only Son of God.”** **John 3:18**

It is with this message about Christ, by which The Spirit convicts the world, **through** The Church. He convicts the world regarding the sin of unbelief. Then He convicts them in regard to righteousness.

Notice that Jesus said that after convicting of sin, The Spirit would convict the world in regard to righteousness. He did not say “unrighteousness”, but rather, “righteousness”. But to whose righteousness is He referring? Answer: His own. For you see, in order to be forgiven, in order to be saved from the wrath of God, a person must first see for themselves Who Jesus is.

**“But you.” He asked them. “Who do you say that I AM?”**

**Matthew 16:15**

Anyone can make themselves feel good, by comparison with other people. We can always find someone who “appears” to be worse than us in the “righteous department”. But when we truly see Christ, when we compare ourselves to Him, we see the perfect Son of God. And when we try and stand next to Jesus, my friends, we will see just how wretched we truly are. Listen to the words of Isaiah, when He saw God high and lifted up in the Temple.

**Then I said: “Woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen The King, The LORD of armies.”**

**Isaiah 6:5**

Now *that*, my friends is what it means to be convicted by righteousness. Jesus, The Holy One, is the very essence of spotless perfection, and when we truly see Him, we see how we are by comparison. And it is the obligation of His Church to “lift Him up”, so that this world may see His righteousness. His righteousness exposes to the greatest possible degree, our own unrighteousness!

But here is the good news! If you will place your faith in Him, then you will be clothed in His righteousness.

**“He made the One Who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”**

**2 Corinthians 5:21**

The Spirit uses the testimony of The Church to lift up Christ, so that all may see His righteousness then come to Him in faith and receive salvation. Once again, what is the “prime directive”? To lift up Christ so that all men will be drawn to Him. We must keep preaching Jesus. For He is the only hope for a fallen world. Some will despise us, but others will hear, see, and believe.

The third thing with which the Spirit convicts the world is Judgement. Christ’s death upon the cross may well have looked like a victory for the devil, but in fact it was his downfall. The sacrifice upon the cross and the victorious resurrection of Jesus Christ dealt a death blow to the devil. The verdict has already been handed down. Remember what I said earlier about this being like a trial. The Spirit reproves (reads the verdict) in regards to the coming judgment. Just like in a trial, you first have a verdict, and if it reads as “guilty”, then the punishment is handed down. Jesus has already tried Satan and found him to be guilty. He is already judged, and when Christ returns, he will receive his punishment.

The Spirit once again uses the testimony of The Church to let the world know of this judgment. There can be no escape for the devil. The verdict has been read. So anyone who chooses Satan over the saving grace of God through Christ Jesus will be condemned to the same fate. Those who follow the devil and live to appease their own flesh will have the opportunity to spend eternity in hell alongside the evil one.

So there is the reproving ministry of The Spirit. Through His body, The Church, He exposes the sin of unbelief, the righteousness of Christ Jesus, and the coming Judgement.

**His Regeneration Ministry (John 3:1-8)**

**There was a man from the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to him at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform these signs You do unless God were with Him." Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "How can anyone be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked Him. "Can he enter his mother's womb a second time and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again. The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."**

When The Spirit reproveth the world through The Church, those who hear our testimony and believe will be forever transformed. Jesus called this, being "born again" from above. This is the spiritual rebirth that occurs within every believer.

**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation: the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!** **2 Corinthians 5:17**

To be born again is to be remade in The Spirit. Anyone who has come to saving faith has been born again from above by The Spirit of The Living God. And just like the wind itself, though you cannot see it, you can most definitely see its effect. So it is with The Spirit. The way you can tell if someone has been truly reborn by The Spirit is by the radical change He makes within them. This is the regenerative ministry of The Holy Spirit.

Now, when Jesus waded the earth as a man, He personally called each and every one of His disciples by name. So now that He is with The Father, who calls us to follow Christ today? Answer: The Holy Spirit, and He uses the Word of God in conjunction with The Body of Christ to do so. We bear witness according to The Word. For Jesus has made it plain to us that we do not come to God by our own volition.

**"No one can come to Me unless The Father Who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day."** **John 6:44**

In Jesus time on earth, He made those invitations on behalf of The Father personally, but now The Father calls us by The Spirit, *through* The Church. Once again we must remember the prime directive (First Mission) of The Spirit: To lift up The Son of God so that all men shall be drawn to Him. So as we have said and will continue to say, "You can tell a work of The Holy Spirit by what it accomplishes." If it glorifies anyone or anything save Christ, then it is of the flesh. But if it exalts the Name of Jesus and He alone, it is a work of The Spirit.

**Therefore I want you to know that no one speaking by The Spirit of God says, "Jesus is cursed." And no one can say "Jesus is LORD," except by The Holy Spirit.** **1 Corinthians 12:3**

So, it is The Spirit of God, Who reproveth the world (pronounces the guilty verdict) by exalting The Name above all names. And it is also The Spirit of God, Who transforms us when we repent and believe in The Name above all names. He performs these wondrous ministries exclusively through The Church, The Body of Christ. Because the world is unable to receive Him. This is why it is vital for The Church to be about the work of The Spirit by making disciples. So let us make it our daily discipline to crucify our flesh and be led by The Spirit. For when we do so, Christ will be exalted in all the earth.

And let the Spirit-led believer say... TRUTH!!!