

The Holy Spirit: Guaranteed Success of Evangelism

John 16:7-11

Introduction and Outline

- Scripture reading: Ezekiel 36:16-31; John 16:1-15.
- When sharing the gospel, it is very common that someone may show some kind of recognition of their sin and even feel sorrowful for it but then fail to come to saving faith. Why? Is their acknowledgement of sin the Holy Spirit's saving work?
- **2 Corinthians 7:10** "For the sorrow that is according to *the will of God* produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death."
- Outline:

Title: The Holy Spirit — Guaranteed Success of Evangelism

1. The Disciples' Good Companion — Holy Spirit, the Helper (v. 7)
2. The Work of the Holy Spirit — Convicting the World (v. 8)
3. The Key Elements of Conviction — Concerning Sin, Righteousness, and Judgment (vv. 9-11)

The Disciples' Good Companion — Holy Spirit, the Helper (v. 7)

- The context: Jesus teaches his disciples and prays for them the night before His crucifixion (John chapters 14-17). He is about to depart and His disciples will be left in this world to fulfill the mission God called them to do, namely, preaching the gospel. The purpose of Jesus' farewell discourse is to prepare disciples to know what's going to happen and how to face it after Jesus departs.
- "Helper": Originally means One who encourages, exhorts, or comforts. The most essential thing that the disciples need to know is that God will give the Holy Spirit to them to be with them forever. The Holy Spirit will help them in all things and help them to live out the lives God wants them to live out (cf. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7).
- "It is to your advantage": What advantage? The next verse explains that the Holy Spirit will "convict the world." Why is this the disciples' advantage? Because the mission of the disciples is to preach the gospel to the world, to "make disciples of all the nations." (Matthew 28:19) Were it not for the Holy Spirit's work, it would be impossible to fulfill that mission. Unless the

Holy Spirit Himself works in man's heart, nobody would be willing to deny himself and take up his cross daily to follow Jesus!

- Jesus says, Don't worry, I will send the Holy Spirit to you! He will testify about me! He will convict the world! You just preach the message I entrusted to you faithfully, and the ultimate result is fulfilled by the Holy Spirit Himself! This is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit guarantees success in evangelism! ---We are the testimonies of that!

The Work of the Holy Spirit — Convicting the World (v. 8)

- “convict the world”: Conviction of sin is the Holy Spirit's work in man's heart.

Ezekiel 36:27, 31 “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations.”

The key of conviction is objective understanding, not subjective feeling. It is a legal term, just as “sin”, “righteousness”, and “judgment” are all legal terms. To convict means “to find or prove to be guilty.” The focus is the objective knowledge of the fact of sin.

- “the world”: Who is the world? Not all people, otherwise all will be convicted, repent and be saved. But it's not merely referring to believers either. The word “world” under John's pen is often directly against God (cf. 7:7; 8:23; 12:31; 15:19; 1 John 2:15), referring to all that is under the power of Satan, including all unbelievers.

John 15:19 “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.”

Conclusion: “The world” here focuses precisely on the turning point where one is converted from unbelief to belief! God chooses some people out of the world, separating them from this evil world which is hostile toward God. This is exactly the work of the Holy Spirit to convict the world. How does this happen exactly? The three key elements of conviction are explained in vv 9-11——concerning sin, concerning righteousness and concerning judgment!

The Key Elements of Conviction — Concerning Sin, Righteousness, and Judgment (vv. 9-11)

- “concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me”: specifically refers to the sin of unbelief, which is the sin of rejecting Jesus, thereby rejecting the only true God. It is the sin of sins and the greatest sin! (cf. Matthew 11:20-24)

Unbelief is not only the greatest sin, it is also the root of all other sins. Romans 1:18-32 talks about “the domino effect of sin”:

Romans 1:21, 24, 26, 28“For even though they knew God, they **did not honor Him** as God or give thanks.....Therefore God **gave them over** in the lusts of their hearts to impurity.....For this reason God **gave them over** to degrading passions.....And just as they **did not see fit to acknowledge God** any longer, God **gave them over** to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper.....”

- “concerning righteousness”: Legal term, referring to the legal standard on morality. In God’s court, the standard is God’s Law. God is holy and perfect, so His Law is holy and perfect. No sin can be tolerated. Righteousness is God’s legal standard for man.

“because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me”: What’s the relationship between God’s legal standard and Jesus’ ascension?

- 1) Jesus, while on earth, was the perfect embodiment of righteousness —— He revealed God’s righteousness with His perfect and holy life; He exposed man’s corrupt self-righteousness; and He preached clearly on the righteousness God requires. After Jesus’ ascension, the Holy Spirit will carry on Jesus’ work to convict the world by revealing God’s righteousness to them.
- 2) Resurrection and ascension prove Jesus’ righteousness. The Holy God can’t accept anything defiled by sin; therefore, resurrection and ascension prove that Jesus has satisfied all God’s righteous requirements. His is the only righteousness to God. Believer’s salvation depends entirely on Jesus’ righteousness, and this is the core of the gospel! When the Holy Spirit convicts the world, He will let them know Jesus’ righteousness, and know what you need before God is the perfect righteousness of Jesus!

Romans 1:4 says Jesus “who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead,”

- “concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged” : Satan is “the ruler of this world.” This doesn’t mean Satan has the power to control all things. God alone is sovereign over all. “This world” is all that is hostile toward God. Satan is the ruler of all forces against God, so the world under Satan’s power is enslaved in sin. How has Satan been judged?

John 12:31-32 “Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.”

When Jesus was lifted up on the cross, satisfying God’s wrath against sin, the elect will be drawn to Him. For the cross is the judgment of Satan that he no longer rules, so the world can now be freed from his power and turn to the Lord Jesus. Satan rules the world by the power of sin, and the cross has dealt fully with sin, so believers are no longer under Satan’s rule.

When the Holy Spirit works conviction in man’s heart, He will show you how He judges sin, how terrible the punishment of hell is, and that you have no other choice but to take refuge in Jesus by following Him in your life!

Summary: What's the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow? Godly sorrow concerns sin, knowing unbelief is the greatest sin, but worldly sorrow doesn't know this; Godly sorrow concerns righteousness, based on God's moral standard, knowing Jesus is the perfect righteousness, but worldly sorrow is based on subjective self-righteousness; Godly sorrow concerns judgment, knowing the eternal punishment of hell, but worldly sorrow only cares about what you get in this life: Godly sorrow is Christ-centered and the worldly sorrow is self-centered: Godly sorrow leads to genuine repentance unto salvation, but worldly sorrow leads to death.

Is this the knowledge of sin for you?

The Holy Spirit guarantees success in evangelism. All we are to do is preach the gospel faithfully and live it out. The result is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit Himself. We can't change our message to produce the result we want by catering to people. The only thing we are to do is to be faithful. Only the Holy Spirit can convict sinners into repentance to be saved, and He will fulfill His work according to God's will!

“The Gospel is a fact; therefore tell it simply. The Gospel is a joyful fact; therefore tell it cheerfully. The Gospel is an entrusted fact; therefore tell it faithfully. The Gospel is a fact of infinite moment; therefore tell it earnestly. The Gospel is a fact of infinite love; therefore tell it feelingly. The Gospel is a fact of difficult comprehension to many; therefore tell it with illustration. The Gospel is a fact about a Person; therefore preach Christ.” —— Archibald Brown