

That You May Believe in the Holy Spirit

John 16

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, October 21, 2018

I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to the Gospel of John. That's the book we're in this morning. We are in the Gospel of John. And as you're turning there, to get you thinking about our passage for this morning, it's been said that one of the least known characters in the Bible is the Holy Spirit. Would you agree to that? One of the least known figures in the Bible is the Spirit of God. I just told you, people today aren't believing what the Bible says about Creation, but they don't believe what the Scripture says about the Spirit either. It's lost on a lot of believers in the church. J. C. Ryle once said, he said,

The Holy Spirit has been called the Cinderella member of the Trinity, because much of what He does is ignored by the church today. Very few people seem interested in what the Bible has to say about Him. They're interested in what the Bible doesn't say, but they're not interested in opening up the Scriptures and studying what it says.

And I think he's right about that.

Christianity Today did an article several months ago called "Three Common Misconceptions of the Holy Spirit", but I think we would all agree there's more than three of them. There's way more. For example, how many of you have ever heard someone say that the Spirit is speaking to them outside of the Scripture or independently of Scripture? I think we all could raise our hand to that, right?

How many of you have heard someone say, "The Holy Spirit told me to do this or the Holy Spirit told me to do that?" And by that, they did not have any reference to the Bible? "He gave me this message or He gave me that message." When what they often mean to say is that, "He gave me goose bumps or I got a warm fuzzy feeling." The Mormons called it a "burning in the bosom". So, there's nothing uniquely Christian about that idea, the cults talk like that too. But you can turn on the radio or go online and you can hear people say, "The Holy Spirit is telling you to get rich if you just read this book." And you read the book and you don't get rich. You stay poor. Or you go to a crusade and they say, "The Spirit is telling you to be healed of cancer if you just come up here on stage." And you go up there on stage and you're not healed of your cancer. That's one way the Spirit is misunderstood today. People think He's speaking to them when He's not.

They also think He's doing things that He's not doing. It's another common misconception of the Spirit. It goes right in line with that. People are chalking up things to the Spirit of God that He's not responsible for. So, you can go on the television (and I'm not going to mention the channels you could turn to), and you could hear about the Spirit of God healing cats, or filling cavities in your teeth as if God is some divine dentist. You can hear about Him giving prophecies and visions. You can hear about Him levitating you off the ground or taking you to heaven and back.

Tim Challies did a good article on that called “Heaven Tourism”. Where he said that the Apostle John went to heaven and back, Isaiah and Ezekiel and other people in the Bible went to heaven and back. But that's not good enough for us today, we have to go too. And then we have to come back and write a book about it and go on a speaking tour. And we chalk it up to the Holy Spirit. That's another misconception today.

People are saying the Spirit is blessing when He's not blessing. They're saying all kinds of things about Him today. But the question I want to answer this morning is, what does the Holy Spirit do today? Have you ever wondered that? With all these wrong ideas about Him floating around in the church, what's the right idea? What does the Spirit of God do? What is He involved in now in the ministry of the church?

If you want to flip over to John chapter 16, that is our chapter for this morning. We're in John chapter 16. If you're joining us for the first time today, we're in the middle of a series on the Gospel of John called the “That You May Believe” series. Because John says he wrote this book so that you may believe. I've read this verse to you many times in this series, but it's kind of the purpose of the book. John 20:30-31 says, “Therefore many other signs Jesus performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.” So, at the end of the book, John says, “This is why I wrote the book. This is why I put it in the Bible, so that you may believe and be saved.” The word “believe” actually occurs 96 times in the Gospel of John. That's more than four times per chapter. Over and over and over again, John says, “I want you to believe in Jesus. I want you to believe in the Christ. I want you to believe in the Son of God.”

A couple of examples of this, in John 3:16, he says, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish.” John says, “Believe in Jesus and you won't perish. You'll be spared from the wrath of God.” In John 6:35, He says, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.” And there you see the idea again. Believe in Jesus and you will not thirst. Your thirst will be satisfied. And you see that idea over and over and over again in this Gospel.

Like I told you, one way John does this, one way he helps you believe is by telling you a story from the life of Christ and then explaining it to you. That's the style of the Apostle John. He gives you story, then explanation, story, then explanation. And the story for John 16 is found back in chapter 13, and it's about Jesus washing the disciples' feet. That's the setting for this event. That's the background. The Son of God got down on His hands and knees and He washed their feet. And the explanation is found in chapters 14 through 17. That was such a strange thing for the disciples, it was so bizarre that Jesus had to spend four chapters telling them why He did that.

I told you last week, you would think after following Jesus for almost four years, three to four years, nothing would have shocked the disciples anymore, right? I mean, you've seen this guy walk on water. You've seen Him raise the dead. You've seen Him feed 20,000 people with a lunch of a little child. You would think nothing would shock you about Jesus Christ. This shocked them. They could not believe He would wash their feet. So, to explain that, Jesus gives

the longest sermon in the Gospel of John. It's one of the longest sermons He ever gave in the whole Bible. It's called the Upper Room Discourse.

And just to give you a timeline for this, if you look in chapter 13:1, this is the timing of this sermon that He gives. We're in chapter 16, but in chapter 13:1, it says, "Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And during supper . . ." That's the timeline of this event. This is a reference to the last supper Jesus had with His disciples before He dies. Verse 1 says, this was the Passover feast. the feast the Jews held each year to remember the time the angel of death passed over them and God brought them out of Egypt. Jesus celebrates that the night before He died. He shared that meal with His disciples.

History tells us He would have done this on Thursday night because the Northern Jews ate there Passover meal on Thursday evening, and the Southern Jews ate theirs on Friday morning. Which means that the next day, the next morning, as the lambs are being slain for the Southern Jews, Jesus dies as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. That's the timeline for this sermon. He's got about 24 hours to live as He says this.

Before we get into all of that, to prepare for His death, Jesus has this meal which Martin Luther called it, "His final handshake with the disciples". This is His final goodbye. He washes their feet and then He tells them why. In chapter 13, he says, "I did this, so you would know how to love one another. That's why I did this." That's the beginning of the sermon. "That's what this means. You should love each other like I just did for you."

I read somewhere this week that love is like death because it consumes everything. If you love someone the right way, it's like dying for them, because you hold nothing back. You hold nothing back from death. You hold nothing back from the one you love, and Jesus says, "This is why I washed your feet and I'm going to the cross," in chapter 13.

In chapter 14, He says, "Do not be troubled. That's another reason why I did this for you, to remind you not to be troubled or afraid. God has it under control. Everything is in His hands. You will be okay."

He tells them in chapter 15 to "Abide in Me." That's what we talked about last week. "Bear fruit and abide in Me." In a moment, all the disciples are going to leave. In just a few hours, all of them are going to abandon Jesus and Jesus says, "There will be forgiveness if you abide in Me, if you come back."

That leads us to chapter 16. Chapter 16 is a pivotal moment in the Upper Room Discourse. It's a crucial chapter because in this chapter, Jesus goes from talking about the disciples to talking about God. He goes from talking about their response to talking about His response. And He says in chapter 16, "That God is going to respond this way, by sending you the Holy Spirit. That's what He's about to do. That's how God is going to help you, by sending the Holy Spirit." If you look down in verse 7, this is skipping forward just a little bit, but Jesus says in chapter 16:7, He says, "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."

That word “helper” there is translated “comforter” or “a counsellor” in some of your translations. But it means “the one who comes alongside” in Greek. It comes from two words. It’s the *paraklétos* in Greek. It comes from *para*, which means “alongside” and *klétos* – “to come”. The Spirit is the one who will come alongside the disciples and help them. That's why it's translated “helper” in some translations or “comforter”.

Jesus said earlier in John 14:18 that, “I will not leave you as orphans,” and here He explains what He means by that. “I’m going to send you the Holy Spirit.”

It might help to mention just as a way of introducing the Spirit, that He has a lot of names in the Bible. This is just one of many. So, for instance, the Spirit is called, the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son to show His unity with the other members of the Trinity. Those are two titles you see for Him in Scripture. He's called “The Spirit of Christ” as well, to show that all three members of the Trinity are one.

If you know your church history, you know in the 11th century, the Greek Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church split over the issue of who sends the Spirit. And the Roman Catholic Church actually had the correct position because they said, the Father and the Son send the Spirit. If I remember correctly, the Greek Orthodox Church said only one of them sent Him.

He's called the Spirit of life and the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of might to tell you what He does. He gives us life and wisdom and might. That's one of His functions. He's called the Spirit of holiness and the Spirit of life and the Spirit of the living God. The Bible says that He fills us and seals us and guides us in the way of salvation.

It's interesting, you can read about the Holy Spirit in Genesis. You remember the Spirit moving along the waters? Do you remember that? The Spirit was at Creation. And you can read about Him in the book of Revelation, because there it says, “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘come.’” That's one of the last verses in the Bible. He's all throughout Scripture. He's everywhere.

And one of the most amazing things He does in the Bible, I think, is what we read about right here, is that He comforts us. He comforts us. You would think if you're the third member of the Trinity, you would have better things to do than to soothe our troubled hearts. But that's what He does. He’s there at Creation, He's there at the end and in the middle, He's comforting us. And I don't think there's anyone here who doesn't need a little comforting, amen?

I told you before, that something like 27% of Canadians struggle with anxiety today. And for many of them, it's debilitating. They have panic attacks, they're paralyzed with fear. And many of those people are Christians, they're believers. So, we need this ministry of the Spirit. We need His help in this. We can't get through life without Him.

During Queen Victoria's reign in England, a poor woman lost her baby and the Queen came to visit her, to see how she was doing. And afterwards, someone asked the poor woman, they said, “Well, what did the Queen say to you? What did she do?” And the poor woman said, “She wept with me. She wept with me. She comforted my troubled heart.” That's what the Spirit does. He comforts us.

The way He does it in John 16 is very interesting. It's not what you would expect. And let's just go ahead and look at this together. If you're taking notes this morning, in John 16, Jesus gives us three ways the Spirit comforts us in this passage. It's a very simple outline, very easy to follow; three ways the Spirit comfort us. In John 14, Jesus says, "Do not be troubled." In John 16, He talks about comfort again. He's about to leave the disciples, He's about to die on a cross and He's trying to give them comfort before He goes. And He says, three ways the Spirit comforts us in our persecution, specifically. This chapter is about (a large part of it is about) persecution.

The first way He comforts us is this: He convicts the world concerning sin. If you're taking notes, that's the first point. He convicts the world concerning sin. We're often anxious about sin, aren't we? We're often worried about it. We see the sin around us, we see the sin inside of us. We turn on the news and it's just sin, sin, sin, and we get afraid. And Jesus says, "You don't need to do that, because the Spirit's going to deal with it. He's going to judge the world concerning sin." If you look back in verse 7 again, it says this, He says, "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin."

Just to give you the context for what Jesus is saying here, as He's going through this sermon and giving His final goodbye to the disciples, He tells them what they can expect when He leaves. And He minces no words, because He says, "Persecution is coming for you. That's what you can expect." If you look up in chapter 15:20, it says one way He says this. He says, "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." In other words, "If they put Me on a cross, they're going to put you on a cross. If they flogged Me and took Me to trial and beat Me and slandered Me, they'll do that to you. You can't expect better than your master." Then he says in verses 1 through 3 of chapter 16, He says,

1 These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling. 2 They will make you outcast from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think he's offering service to God. 3 These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me.

If you remember, the blind man back in John 9 was thrown out of the synagogue, wasn't he? Do you remember that? Jesus said, "That's going to happen to you guys." And He says in verse 2, "Everyone who kills you will think he's offering service to God." It's one thing to kill someone, it's another thing to kill them as a service to God. See the difference? That's a whole new level of murder. And Jesus says that's what they're going to do to you. It's been said, the number one persecutor of Christians throughout history has been other Christians. It's been the church, the false church, the apostate church. And that's what Jesus says here. "The synagogue is going to persecute you, men."

So, He says in verses 5 through 8, He says,

5 But now I'm going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, "Where are you going?" 6 But because I've said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 But I tell you the truth, it's to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper

will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8 And He, when He comes, will convict the world.”

The word “convict” here is interesting because it means “to indict someone” or “take them to court”. We often say, “I feel convicted of something or the Spirit is convicting me.” And the Spirit does do that. That is a ministry that He does, and it could be an implication of this. But this means to be convicted as a criminal. This means that the judge has heard my case, he's passed sentence and he's thrown the book at me. It's over. Jesus says here that the Holy Spirit will do that to the world over sin. “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”

If you read on in verse 8, He says, “Concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me.” There's lots of sins the Spirit will convict the world of, there's lots of evil that He's going to judge, but right here, Jesus is talking about the sin of unbelief. He says, “Because they don't believe in Me, because they have rejected Me, the Spirit will convict the world over that.”

In other words, you could say it like this, as Jesus is leaving, He tells the disciples, “The world will persecute you, but the Spirit will persecute the world. The world's going to attack you and indict you and drag you to court, but the Spirit one day will do that to the world.”

There're several ways this applies to us. There're several ways this plays out in our lives. Let me give you just a few, just two of them. One is this, this reminds us that God is going to win in the end. He will defeat sin, He will defeat evil. God is going to win in the end. Does anybody ever wonder if God's going to win? Come on, let's be honest, we just had elections. Does anybody ever wonder if God cares anymore? And we see certain people being placed in office and we get worried, don't we? We see certain laws being passed and we can't figure out what's going on. Does God even care anymore?

My mother-in-law was visiting us from Tennessee two weeks ago and I told her, Chilliwack is a wonderful town, wonderful people. And it's interesting because it's so diverse. Because it's in the Bible belt, you have churches on every corner, and you have a lot of sin in this town. It's like right in between the churches, you know. It's like little bit of heaven and then hell. And then a little bit of heaven and then hell. Then a little bit of heaven and then hell. It's all throughout the town. And it makes you wonder, does God care? Let me tell you something, friends, God cares, and He is in control. And one day He's going to judge the world. That's what this passage says. The most sinful event in human history was when the Son of God was nailed to the cross, and the disciples are about to watch it, and Jesus says, “Don't worry, the Spirit will judge the world. He will take care of those who don't believe.”

Let me tell you what else this means. Let me give you another application to this. This means that if you want the Spirit's blessing, and if you want His comfort, then you had better do what He does. You'd better talk about sin. You can't avoid the topic of sin and expect the Spirit's comfort and blessing. It's not a very popular thing to talk about sin today. I mean, it doesn't seem very comforting to people. But those two ideas are mentioned right here in this passage, side by side. The comforter will convict the world concerning sin. Several years ago, the psychologist Karl Menninger wrote a book called “Whatever Became of Sin”. In which he pointed out that the

word “sin” has almost disappeared from our modern vocabulary. He said this, he said, “In all the reproaches made by our modern-day prophets ...” (And if I understand correctly, I believe Karl Menninger was not a Christian. Don't quote me on that, I could be wrong. But I don't think he was.) He said, “In all the reproaches made by our modern-day prophets, one misses any mention of sin, a word which used to be a veritable watchword of the prophets. It was a word that was once on everyone's lips, but is now hardly referred to at all.” He said, “Does that mean no one sins anymore? (Sin with an “I” in the middle). Does it mean no one is guilty of anything? As a society and as a nation, I believe,” Menninger says, “We officially stopped ‘sinning’ some 40 years ago.” We could all say amen to that, right? We used to call it drunkenness, now we call it alcoholism, to say it's a disease and you're not responsible for it. We used to call it pride, now we call it narcissism for the same reason - to say it's not your fault. “You're just a wonderful person and the world needs to realize it.” We used to call it adultery, now we call it irreconcilable differences. We used to call it anxiety, now we call it a chemical imbalance. But the Spirit doesn't talk that way. He uses the word “sin”. He says, “We're all guilty before God.” and if you want His blessings, we have to think that way too. We can't leave it out.

I don't know about you, but I don't find any comfort listening to a preacher who doesn't talk about sin. It doesn't comfort me, because there's sin all around me. There's sin inside of me. And I don't find comfort going to a church that doesn't talk about it. I want to talk about it. I want to know what to do with it, I want to know what God's going to do with it. And Jesus tells you right here, He says, “When the Spirit comes, He will convict the world concerning sin.” That's how He's going to deal with it. That's what He's going to do. That's the comfort you can have as a Christian. All the evil, horrible, terrible things you see are going to be dealt with one day on Judgment Day.

It leads to a second way the Spirit comforts us in our persecution. And that is this: He will judge the world concerning righteousness. The passage says, He will judge the world concerning sin, He will judge it for its unbelief. And second, He will judge the world concerning righteousness. These are all different ways of saying the same thing, but they hit it from different angles.

For instance, righteousness was a big deal in the first century to the Jews. Because everything they did, they did for righteousness sake. They did to be righteous in God's eyes. The book of Jubilee (one of their ancient books) said Abraham was perfect in all his deeds. And the implication was, we can be perfect too. That's how we're getting to heaven. That's how we're going to be saved. We're going to be good enough people, righteous.

In fact, the twisted thing about this, is that they crucified Jesus over this issue because they said He was unrighteous. They crucified Jesus for being what they said was a sinful man. In John 18:36, they called Him an evildoer. And in chapter 19:7, they said, “He ought to die,” meaning He deserves to die. So, Jesus addresses that here on the front end and He says in verse 8, He says, “And He, when He comes (the Spirit 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 see Me.”

That sounds a little mysterious there, and it is to a degree because the Spirit is mysterious. There's a lot of mysterious things in this passage. But the idea here is simple enough and it's this,

He says, "Not only will the Spirit convict the world concerning sin, because they don't know what sin is. They don't use the word sin anymore, but the Spirit will also convict the world concerning righteousness because they don't know what that is either." "The world can't tell right from wrong anymore. They can't even spot a righteous man," Jesus says. Jesus was the most righteous man who ever lived. The most sinless. He even says in John 8:46, He asked His enemies, "Which one of you can convict Me of sin?" I have never said that to anyone on the planet, because you guys could just list it all out, right? Nobody said anything. In John 19:4, Pilate said at His trial, he said, "I find no guilt in Him. He's done nothing wrong." And the Jews said, "Crucify Him anyway," because they didn't know what righteousness was. They had no idea. So, Jesus says, the Spirit is coming to judge them for that. He's going to deal with that too.

When Jesus says in verse 8, "Concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me," that's a reference to His ascension into heaven. It's not a doctrine we talk about a whole lot, but Acts 1:9 says that, "After He had said these things, Jesus was lifted up while they were looking on and a cloud received Him out of their sight." In other words, He went out of their sight and into heaven. He was lifted up into the presence of God because He was a righteous man.

You will not be lifted up into the presence of God for your own righteousness. You guys understand that. You won't be lifted up into heaven for your own goodness, Jesus was. And they crucified Him. And He says here, that most evil act in human history will be dealt with by the Spirit of God.

I can't tell you guys how many times I've watched the news and said, "What is the world coming to? They can't tell right from wrong anymore." You guys know what I'm talking about? Some of you guys are like me, you stopped watching the news. You may get a little newsfeed or something, but you can't watch it because you just get so sad. You see it all over the place. One crazy thing after another, it's like we're trying to outdo each other on the issue of crazy. We have a statement back in Tennessee, you know, "We've got enough crazy here, keep your own back there." It's crazy upon crazy in the world today.

Two men got into an argument and to settle it, they went to a judge who heard the first man's argument and he said, "You know, that's right, that's right. That sounds good." Then the second man spoke up and he heard the second man's argument, and he said, "That's right, that's right. That sounds good." Finally, the clerk spoke up and he said, "Judge, you can't say that about both of them, you're going to have to pick one." And the judge said, "That's right, that's right. That sounds good." The world talks that way, right? Everything is right, everything is okay, everything is good until you tell them you're a Christian. Then it changes. Then all of a sudden, there is a standard of right and wrong.

You know, we got to be honest here in Canada, we're not persecuted like they are in other places, but you guys know what it's like. You pray before a meal, you bow your head at work and the co-worker says, "What are you doing? That's offensive to me. Don't push your religion on me." Right? I don't have that problem in my job, but I'm guessing you guys ... So, they're not killing us anymore, but they're telling us not to push our religion on them. Or you take your kids to a playground around the corner and another mom sees your Christian t-shirt and she says, "You're

not a Christian anymore, I heard that Christians hate gay people. I heard that Christians hate people who abort their babies.” And then she takes her children and leaves. You go to school and they tell you, you can't have a Biblical view of marriage or ask others to or you'll lose your accreditation. We just saw that, right, with Trinity Western up the road? They tell you, you can't speak out against other religions because that's a hate crime and you could get in a lot of trouble for that. You see the world thinks like that. It has a twisted idea of righteousness. It's got a standard of right and wrong. It's just a wrong standard.

I had a relative recently telling me to stop sending her Bible verses. And the funny thing is I have never sent her a Bible verse to my shame. I was actually ashamed of that. I thought, “I'm embarrassed, I haven't sent you - what are you talking about?”

When you look at other parts of the world, it's way worse than this. According to the Open Doors website which monitors persecution around the world, last year alone, they said 255 Christians were killed every month and 160 were imprisoned. 104 were kidnapped and 60 churches were attacked simply for being Christian. And the website said, it's largely happening in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. It said North Korea is the worst place of persecution. Groups like ISIS are largely responsible for it. That's not happening here, but it is happening there, and those are your brothers and sisters in Christ, amen? It is happening there and that's your family. And Jesus says here that the Spirit will convict the world concerning that. He'll make them answer for it. And that's not said as a way to get revenge. That's said as a way to give you comfort. To give you assurance.

I heard one commentator this week say, “Jesus came into the world the first time to save the world, the Spirit came to convict it, and in doing so, give you comfort and give you assurance.” Matthew 10:28-31 says, “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul. Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.” If God cares about a bird that falls out of a tree, He's going to care when you're persecuted.

It leads to a final way the Spirit comforts us in our persecution, a final way He helps us in our troubles. Just to review, He will convict the world concerning sin. That's the first way He does this. He won't let the world get away with sin, with the evil that it does. And second, He'll convict the world concerning righteousness. That's the one we just talked about. He's not going to let it get away with these twisted ideas of right and wrong. He won't let the world persecute you without answering for it. That leads to a third way the Spirit comforts us in our persecution that ties this together, and that is this: He will convict the world concerning judgment. A third way He comforts us in our persecution is that He will convict the world concerning judgment. I just mentioned these three points should go together, because if He convicts the world concerning sin and righteousness, then it just makes sense, He'll convict the world concerning judgment. They go hand in hand. The idea is the world is judging you for being a Christian, but Jesus says, “One day the Spirit will judge the world.” The world is pointing its finger at you and saying, “You're wrong, you're wrong, you're wrong,” and one day the Spirit will say that to those who don't believe.

If you look in verses 8 through 11, just to read the scope of the verses again. He says,

8 And He, when the Spirit comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; 11 and concerning judgment because the ruler of this world has been judged.

“The ruler of this world” is another way of saying Satan, or the one who leads the persecution. To sum this up, Jesus says, “Not only will the Spirit convict the world, but He will convict the one ruling the world, the strongest being in the world. He will convict the one who's largely responsible for your persecution.” I think it goes without saying that if Satan can't escape judgment, then neither can his followers, amen? And that's the point here. If the devil can't get out of God's courtroom, then neither will his people. I quoted Martin Luther to you earlier, but Luther said, “The devil is God's devil.” And by that, he doesn't mean the devil's on the same side as God, he means the devil will answer to God. The devil will give an account. Satan, if you look in the book of Revelation, he doesn't rule over hell, he's punished in hell. I can't think of anything more twisted than for the devil to rule forever in hell, to rule anywhere. He doesn't rule in hell. God does. He's punished there. And that's another source of comfort for you, because a day is coming when the devil will be finished with his work. A day is coming when God will put an end to it.

A new Christian in Africa once asked his pastor, he said, “Pastor, is the devil bigger than me?” And the pastor said, “Yes, he is. He's much bigger than you.” And the Christian said, “Well, is he bigger than you are pastor?” And the pastor said, “Yeah, he's way bigger than me.” But the pastor said, “He's not bigger than Jesus. The devil is not stronger than Him.” And the Christian said this, he said, “That's good. I won't fear Him then, because Jesus is my friend.” Friends, Jesus is your friend. He is your Saviour, and He is bigger than the devil. So, you shouldn't fear him anymore. You don't need to be afraid.

Just to walk you through the rest of the chapter here, Jesus says in verses 12 through 15 that, “The Spirit will one day guide you into all truth.” In the flow of what He's saying here to these men in the upper room, that's another way of saying, “The Spirit will inspire the Bible through you. He will give you the Scriptures and give you all truth,” which is another source of comfort. All the truth that you need is in this book.

In verses 16 through 22, Jesus says, “My resurrection will comfort you as well, because when you see Me rise from the dead, you'll know that you can rise from the dead. When you see Me come back to life, you'll know that you can come back to life. You may not know that now, but you will then.”

Then He says down in verse 33, if you look at the end of the chapter in John 16:33, here's how the Lord sums this up. He says, “These things, I've spoken to you so that in Me, you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world.” This is what it all boils down to. This is where your comfort lies. Jesus has overcome the world. You can have peace and comfort and assurance knowing that Jesus has defeated all of this, as the word implies. He has prevailed against it. The world flogged Him, beat Him and crucified Him on a cross and He came back. And one day you'll come back, and you'll defeat all of this through Him.

Which leads me to ask, do you believe that this morning. Do you believe that Jesus has overcome the world? Do you believe He's bigger than the devil? I mean, you can look around even a nice town like Chilliwack, and there's a pretty big devil in Chilliwack. Do you believe Jesus is bigger? Do you believe the Spirit will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment? Do you believe He will take care of all those who are judging you and bring them to justice?

You know, there's a lot of talk about justice today. I don't know if they talked about it in the Chilliwack elections, but they talk about it in the national elections. Everybody wants to talk about social justice and economic justice and environmental justice. But can I tell you, this is what justice looks like at the most fundamental level: God will judge the world. The Spirit will judge the world. The Son will judge the world, and you should have comfort in that. You should be at peace. Whatever's going on now, God will take care of it in the end. However bad it is now, He will make it right one day.

It was a Sir Thomas Lipton of England, the millionaire and famous boat racer who said, just before dying, he said, "I would give up every trophy in my collection for the one thing I haven't got; eternal life." He said, "I would give it all up, all my money, all my riches, all my possessions, if I could escape the judgment of God." You can do that this morning. You can escape God's judgment if you trust in Jesus Christ. This is the message of the Gospel of John. Yes, God will judge the world. Yes, God will punish those who don't believe. But for those who believe in Jesus, there is eternal life and forgiveness of sins. Will you believe that today, and will you do it as we come to the Lord's table? Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for this word of assurance from our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, and for what He has guaranteed us in this Gospel. He has promised us something that I think we all need to hear. I think I'm a relatively young man, but I've seen the world get worse in my short lifetime, and I'm sure many of our dear brothers and sisters in Christ have seen it get even worse than I have, and we do wonder these questions. Sometimes we wonder where are You God? And You tell us where You are. Right here. You're on the throne and You will one day take care of all this evil. Lord, we rest in that, we trust in that, we put our hope in it. Father, we thank you for this word from the Lord Jesus Christ. Entering the darkest chapter in human history, His death on the cross, and He gave these words of comfort. Lord, may these words comfort us this morning. I pray if there's any here who are wrestling with anxiety, wrestling with fear and worry, He would calm their troubled hearts.

If there's any here this morning who hear about the judgment of God, they hear about the punishment of the world and they feel the weight of that, as if that's coming on them, Lord, I pray they would do what John says in this book and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we come to Your table Father, may You be honoured and glorified as we remember what Christ has done, and we pray this all in His name, amen.