

# The Spirit of Truth

By Henry Mahan

**Bible Text:** John 16:1-15

**Henry T. Mahan Tape Library**

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Our subject today is the Spirit of Truth. I am going to be reading from a very familiar passage of Scripture found in John chapter 16. I will be speaking, the Lord willing, from the first 15 verses. And I would like very much if you would take your Bible and follow as I read and commend on these verses. It would be so helpful. I think you would get more out of the message if you would do that. I urge our folks at home. They all bring their Bibles with them and sit with them open and I speak verse by verse, phrase by phrase.

And these words in John chapter 16 are among the last words that our Lord left with his disciples before he went to the cross and died for our sins and ascended back to the Father. And he says here in verse one ... John, actually, chapter 13, 14, 15 and 16 are the last, the final words of our Lord to the apostles as he instructs them how God will use them and what to expect and what will take place in their ministry and so forth. He instructs his disciples.

And here in verse one he says, "These things have I spoken unto you that you should not be discouraged and stumble because," verse two, "the religious leaders will put you out of the synagogue. They will despise your message and despise your gospel and they will put you out of the synagogue."

And in verse two he says, "And the time will come when men will have such hatred for this gospel of grace and the gospel of a crucified and buried, risen Lord, and redemption by his blood that these religious leaders will put you to death." They will put believers to death in the name of God thinking they do God a service. They will put the disciples and actually all of the disciples except one were put to death. They were all martyred, every one of them except John. And the beloved John was exiled to the Isle of Patmos where he wrote the book of Revelation. God gave him the Revelation of Jesus Christ. But all the rest of them were put to death in the name of religion, in the name of God. And that is what he is telling them here. They will put you to death in the name of God thinking they are doing God a service.

And verse three he says, listen. "These things will they do to you because they do not know the Father and they do not know me." Nobody persecutes a believer who knows God. That's right. No one persecutes a believer in the gospel of grace who knows God or loves God or knows Jesus Christ. "But these things will they do unto you because they

do not know the Father and do not know me. And these things have I told you that when they come to pass you may remember that I told you about them.”

Now look at verse five. “Now I go my way to him that sent me.” Our Lord is going to the cross, to the tomb, rise from the grave and ascend back to the Father. “I go to the cross,” he says, “to atone for your sins. I die that you might have eternal life to put away your transgressions. I go to the grave as your scapegoat. I rise again as your justifier that God may be just and justify the believer. I go to heaven, to the most holy place, to the secret place of the most high as your high priest, as your high priest to intercede for you. I go to the right hand of the Father as your mediator. There is one God and one mediator between God and men and that is the man Christ Jesus. I go to him that sent me. I go my way to him that sent me.”

And verse six, “And because I say this to you that I go away to my Father, sorrow hath filled your heart.”

And then our Lord tells them why they shouldn't be sorrowful that he is leaving. He gives them two reasons. He says, “I have told you I am going back to the Father. I go my way to the Father. And because I said this sorrow has filled your hearts. But let not your heart be troubled. I go to prepare a place for you. Let not your heart be sorrowful. I go to the cross, to the tomb and to glory to prepare for you a place and you for the place. And when go, I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there you may be also. So don't sorrow. Rejoice. Rejoice.”

And then he gives the second reason why they should not be sorrowful at his leaving going back to the Father, why they should rejoice. The second reason is in verse seven. He says, “Nevertheless, I tell you a truth. It is expedient. It is necessary for you that I go away. It is necessary because if I don't go away the Holy Spirit of God will not come, the Comforter will not come. If I don't go to the cross and go back to the Father, the Comforter will not come because if I do not die, there is no gospel to reveal.”

You see, the Holy Spirit's ministry is to reveal the gospel, to take the things of Christ and show them to us. But if Christ doesn't die and go back to the Father, there is no gospel to reveal. “If I do not die there is no blood to sprinkle.” There is no atonement. There is no sacrifice for sin. The Holy Spirit has no office. He has no purpose. “If I do not die and rise again, there is no salvation to apply. There is no forgiveness to grant. There is no eternal life to give.”

The Son of God must be lifted up. He didn't die as an example. He died as a substitute. He didn't die as a martyr. He died as a Redeemer. “If I do not die, you don't need a Comforter, because there is no comfort to give.”

So these two reasons. He said, “I have told you these things. I go my way. My way is the cross and the tomb and the throne and I go my way to prepare a place for you. And if I prepare a place I will come again and receive you. Don't be sorry. So don't be troubled.”

And the second reason is it is essential. "It is necessary for me to do this because if I do not die on the cross there is no gospel, there is no salvation, there is no eternal life, there is no redemption. But if I go away I will send you another Comforter, the Holy Spirit who will abide with you forever. And when the Holy Spirit is come," now watch verse eight. And here is the ministry of God's Holy Spirit. "And when the Holy Spirit is come, he will convict the world. He will reprove the world of sin."

Now what does the word "reprove" mean? It means to convince. He will convince the world of sin. He will rebuke. He will convict. He will convict the world three things, of sin, of righteousness and of judgment.

Now, my friends, conviction of sin. I want to look at that for just a moment. He is going to convince the world of sin. Conviction of sin is essential to salvation. Before a person comes to the Savior in faith seeking mercy, he has got to discover that he needs a Savior. Do you see what I am saying?

Before a person comes to Christ by faith seeking mercy, he has got to discover he needs mercy, he needs salvation. He is a sinner. He has got to be convinced that he is a sinner.

Our Lord was eating with some sinners and publicans and so forth and the religious fellows got upset about it. And they asked his disciples in Matthew chapter nine. They said, "Why does your master eat with publicans and sinners?"

And our Lord knew what they said and he replied. He says, "The well do not need a doctor, but those who are sick. And I didn't come to call the righteous. I came to call sinners to repentance. No you go learn what that means."

This is a faithful saying. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And the only people who come to him in faith and believe on him and are saved by him are sinners. And that is the first thing they have got to discover. They are a sinner.

So the Holy Spirit convinces men of sin. Before a person seeks the mercy of the Lord he is made to see his guilt, his inability. What is the publican in the temple? He smote on his breast. He wouldn't lift even his eyes to heaven. But he smote on his breast and cried, "Oh, God, be merciful to me the sinner." He is seeking mercy. Why? He is a sinner.

And I will tell you this. If a person misses this Holy Spirit conviction of sin, he is going to miss repentance because repentance is toward God because of sin. And if he misses repentance he is going to miss faith. And if he misses faith, he is going to miss Christ. If he misses Christ he is going to miss eternal life. So the very start of his whole procedure is to discover I'm a sinner. The only ... Christ came to save sinners. Christ died for the ungodly. Christ came to seek and to save the lost. And the only people who seek a Savior are sinners. And that is what the Holy Spirit ... Christ said he will convince the world of sin, of sin, convince them, convict them, reprove them, reveal it to them that they are sinners.

The Holy Spirit conviction has to do with these three important things. I want to look at them. He says, “The Holy Spirit when he is come, he will convince the world of sin because they believe not on me, of righteousness, I go to my Father, of judgment because the prince of this world is judged. Holy Spirit conviction is always related to Christ. He will convince the world of sin because they believe not on me. He will convince the world of righteousness because I go to my Father. He will convince the world of judgment because the prince of this world came to me and found nothing in me and he was cast out and defeated.”

The prince of this world came to Adam and conquered him. He came to Job and broke him. He came to Peter and embarrassed him. He came to Christ and he conquered him. He destroyed his power. He bruised his head.

George Whitefield says this. Now if you will notice, if you will notice this word “sin.” The Holy Spirit will convince the world of sin. It is singular. It is not S-I-N-S. It is sin. He will convince the world of sin. S-I-N-S—sins are what we do. Sins are what we do in word, in thought, in deed. It is an action. Sins are what we do. Sin is why we do it. S-I-N singular is our nature. It is what causes us to do it. It is because our hearts are bad.

Why is the water bad? The fountain is bad. Why are our deeds bad? Our motives are bad. Why are our actions bad? Our attitude is bad. So he is going to convince the world of sin, nature, the fall, original sin, how we are born, born with a potential, born with the nature of sin.

George Whitefield said, “When a man repents he repents of three things. He repents of what he is. He is a sinner by nature.” A man is not a thief because he steals. He was a thief before he ever stole or he wouldn’t have stolen. A man is not a liar because he lies. He lies because he is a liar. His nature. And so when we repent before God we repent because of what we are. In sin my mother conceived me. I was shapen in iniquity. I was brought forth speaking lies from the womb. The wicked are estranged from the womb speaking lies. That’s right. He convinces us of what we are.

And then he convinces us of sins, what we have done. Everybody is embarrassed about what we have said, what we have done, what we have thought, what we have ... just everything about us. And then, thirdly, he convinces us of what we haven’t done.

What we are, sinners; what we have done, sinned against God; what we haven’t done, we haven’t loved God with all our hearts. We haven’t loved our neighbor as ourself. We haven’t prayed. We haven’t worshipped God like we should. We haven’t been the example we should have been. And the whole thing is because of what? Unbelief.

Christ said he will convince the world of sin, “Because they believe not on me.” That is the grand daddy of all sin. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. But he that believeth not on the Son hath made Go a liar because he believes not the record, the Scriptures that God hath given concerning his Son. The Holy Spirit is coming to convince this world, Christ said, of sin, of sins and of what we haven’t done.

And I will tell you. Of our so called righteousnesses, without the blood of Christ they are filthy rags. The best we have ever done, Isaiah said, is filthy rags. It takes the blood of Christ to make them acceptable to God.

And he is going to convince the world of righteousness. Now I want you to listen to me here. This righteousness is true holiness. I am not talking about pasted on holiness and claimed holiness and boasted holiness and holiness of piety and holiness outside and that's not what I am talking about. I am talking about true righteousness, true holiness.

Now to illustrate this he is going to convince the world of righteousness, "because I go to my Father," Christ said.

Now to illustrate this I am going to take you back to the Garden of Eden. Now you stay with me and listen. Adam sinned. Adam sinned and when he sinned his eyes were open and he felt guilt and shame and fear because he realized he was naked, naked before God. That is what he realized. So what did he do? Number two, he got some fig leaves and sewed them together and made himself an apron to cover his nakedness. But it didn't work. It didn't suffice. It didn't him any peace. How do I know that? He ran and hid.

He had on his fig leaf apron. He covered himself pretty well, but he heard God coming and if he had been satisfied with those leaves he would have stayed where he was, but he didn't. He wasn't satisfied. He didn't suffice. And so he ran and hid in the bushes.

And then what happened? Number three, God slew an animal and made coats of skin to cover the nakedness of these sinners. Do you see what the Lord is saying? He will convince the world of this righteousness business, this holiness, this true holiness, not play like, not put on, not talking about living above sin or doing better than the neighbor is. That's like one worm bragging because he is not like another worm. But listen to what our Lord is saying here. He is saying that he will convince the world of righteousness, "Because I die and go back to the Father."

Now we are like Adam. We have sinned. We find it out. We realize we have sinned. It takes some people a long, long time to realize they are sinners. And we have realized we are naked. We are naked before God. God is unhappy with us and dissatisfied with us and ... and ... and we are not ... we are just sinners. We find it out. That is what we do first.

The second thing, we try to cover it. We try to cover our guilt. We get religion and we make a profession of faith and we start going to church and all our works. What we are doing is sewing fig leaves. We are getting them all fixed up so we can have some kind of covering. We found out we are sinners. We are naked and we drank too much and cussed too much and did all these things, you know, and wicked. So we are going to straighten our lives up and get us some fig leaves and cover ourselves with our works, but it doesn't work. It doesn't suffice, not an honest person, it doesn't suffice. And he knows that something is missing. He knows there is an emptiness in here. There is no peace. There is no joy. There is no rest.

And he hears God and he reads the Word and he runs and he hides because he knows his little profession of faith and his work and his religion and all these things he has done all these years and professed to change him and all that, they won't, they don't, they are not acceptable to God.

And then he discovers that God sent a lamb just like Adam. Adam found out he was naked and tried to cover it and it didn't work. And then God took over and God slew a Lamb, shed his blood, took his skin and covered old Adam and God accepted him and embraced him. And you and I found out we are sinners and our works won't work and then we discover God did send a Lamb and he died on the cross as our representative and he obeyed the law as our righteousness and almighty God sent Christ to redeem us and justify us and now we are covered with his righteousness and we are washed in his blood. Here the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin and Christ said, "I go to my Father. I go as your representative. I go as your mediator. I go as your high priest. And the very fact that God accepts me on your behalf and seats me at his right hand means God accepts you and receives you and seats you with me."

And we realize now the reality and completeness and sufficiency not of our holiness and righteousness, but of his. Do you see that? The Holy Spirit will convince us of sin, what we are, what we have done, what we haven't done. And then he will convince us that we just haven't got any holiness in our sin, no righteousness. And all of our attempts to cover ourselves and profess to be what we are not inside won't work. They may fool people, but not God. And we know he is not happy or satisfied with what we do.

And he slew a lamb. And with his righteousness he clothed us and with his blood he purified and cleansed us and justified us. And then he is going to convince the world of judgment because the prince of this world is judged.

Now this first refers to Satan. He is the prince of this world. He is the prince. Satan is the prince of this world. He is the prince of the power of the air. But he is defeated. He was defeated at the cross. The prince of this world is not going to be judged. He is already judged. That is what it says he is judged. He is defeated. He is conquered. His power is gone. The Lord Jesus, he me Christ and Christ conquered him and defeated him.

Secondly, this judgment refers to the judgment of believers. He convinces us of judgment because the prince of this world is judged. And our sins are put away. Our enemy is conquered. There is therefore now no judgment to them who are in Christ. Judgment is put away. Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God. And we can say with Paul in Romans 8:33, "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect. It is God that justifies." Satan has nothing to do with God's people. He is defeated. He is cast out. God's people belong to the shepherd, the good shepherd, the chief shepherd. He leads them. They are his people. Nobody can lay anything to their charge. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died. Yea, rather that is risen again who is seated at the Right hand of God who ever lives to make intercession for us.

Thirdly, judgment refers to Satan. He is defeated, cast out. It refers to the believer. There is no judgment for the believer. And then it refers to unbelievers.

Now, listen. Hebrews nine, "It is appointed unto men once to die. And after this the judgment." And I told you that all of this conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit relates to Christ, to the Lord Jesus. He will convince them of sin because they don't believe on me, of righteousness because I go to my Father and of judgment because the prince of this world is judged. And God is going to judge this world by that man Christ Jesus.

You see, the Father judgeth no man. John 5:22. The Father judgeth no man. He hath committed all judgment to the Son. That's right. In Acts 17:31, listen. God commanded all men everywhere to repent because he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world, not his Church, not his believers, not his sheep, the world. He will judge the world in righteousness, in holiness. By Jesus Christ, by that man Jesus Christ whom he hath ordained and have given assurance of that fact in that he raised him from the dead.

Our Lord ... now what's the ministry of the Holy Spirit? Let me read on a little further in verse 12 and 13. And our Lord then said to his disciples, "I have many things to say to you, but you can't bear them now. You can't bear them now. Howbeit when the Spirit of ..."

And that is so of us. I have been in the ministry now for a long time, almost 50 years. And there are so many, many, many, many things I ... I ... he hasn't taught me, I haven't learned. I don't know. The same thing with you. And he says that to us. I have many things to say to you. And you are not able to bear them now. God has to reveal things to us in due time, in his time.

You don't believe anything unless you experience it and you can't experience it unless he himself teaches you. That's right. So this Holy Spirit, he is going to guide you into all truth. The Holy Spirit is our teacher and he uses the Word of God. That is how the Lord teaches us. He guides us into truth in his Word. There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Spirit and the Son. These three are one. And there are three that bear record on earth, the Spirit, the Word and the blood. And God uses the Holy Spirit to teach us with his Word and by the cross.

And then, listen. He will not speak of himself. What he hears that shall he speak. The Holy Spirit is sent by God and he teaches God's children with God's Word, God's Word, The Holy Spirit doesn't speak of himself. Christ used that word to apply to himself as the mediator. He says, "The words that I speak are not my words, but he words of him that sent me. And when the Holy Spirit comes to teach believers he doesn't teach them of himself. He teaches the Word of God. That's right. He'll not speak of himself. He will not speak about himself either. But he won't speak of himself. What he hears. That is what he speaks. And he will take the things of God and show them to you.

Now watch this, verse 14. "The Holy Spirit shall glorify me."

The Holy Spirit never calls attention to himself, not to his gifts. He doesn't call attention to the preacher. He doesn't call attention to the individual believer in his antics and emotion? The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ. He teaches the truth. He is the Spirit of truth. He teaches the Word. That is the textbook, the Word. And he teaches the things of Christ. He takes the things of Christ and shows them to us.

And he says this. "And he will glorify me for he shall receive of mine and show it to you." That is the ministry of the Spirit of truth.

Now I have two messages on this tape. "Jesus Christ is the only King" and the one I just preached, "The Spirit of Truth." Send two dollars. We will mail you both of these messages on one tape. Until next week may God bless you everyone.