

WHAT IS THE MISSING NOTE IN PRESENT DAY PREACHING?

JOHN 16:7-11 • TV100B

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16TH, 1979

By
HENRY T. MAHAN

Transcribed, edited and published
JULY 17TH, 2016

HENRY T. MAHAN TAPE LIBRARY
Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501

John 16:7-11

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”

I’ve got a big title for this message today. I believe it’s an important message. I do earnestly and sincerely pray that the Spirit of the living God will not leave us to our own understanding, but He will be pleased to take the Word and make it effectual, to give us in this hour, a word from God.

I want to speak to you on the subject: **“WHAT IS THE MISSING NOTE IN PRESENT DAY PREACHING?”**

Now, there’s a lot of preaching and a lot of religious services but something obviously is missing; it’s missing from the pulpit. That’s where the whole trouble begins. That’s the source of our problem.

WHAT IS THE MISSING NOTE IN PRESENT DAY PREACHING?

JOHN 16:7-11 • HENRY T. MAHAN

It's not the pew, and preachers can say all they want to about the people in the pew; the people in the pew only echo what's said from the pulpit. They only know what they hear and they can't rise above their pastor or their religious leaders.

And the problem in the pew is the problem in the pulpit. That's where it all starts. What's the missing note in present day preaching?

Now, I'm reading for a text: **John chapter 16 beginning with verse 7.** Our Lord is speaking to His disciples. This is shortly before He went to the cross, shortly before He gave His life a ransom for many and He says to them:

“Nevertheless I tell you a truth. It is expedient for you that I go away for if I go not away the Comforter, (the Holy Spirit), will not come to you. But, if I depart I will send him unto you and when he is come he will reprove, (and the word is convict, or convince); he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.”

Now my friend, what our Lord calls salvation is more than giving mental agreement or a mental assent to some religious facts. Salvation is a lot more than just believing some doctrine.

It's a whole lot more than just believing some facts about God and some facts about Jesus Christ and some facts about some events that took place in the past. Now, salvation is a whole lot more than that.

And salvation is a whole lot more than reformation of life, turning over a new leaf, quitting a few sins and hanging on to a few other sins. There's a whole lot more to salvation than that because a man can reform his life without even knowing God.

Every man has a conscience and every man has some understanding of what's right and what's wrong. And so, that's not what we call salvation, not what the Lord calls salvation.

And salvation according to our Master is a whole lot more than performing certain rituals and certain ceremonies of religion. It's a whole lot more than that.

You can go through the motions of certain religious ceremonies and certain religious ordinances and it have no effect, whatsoever on your heart, on your attitude, on your spirit, and on your relationship with God. So, the deeds of this body do not make right the spirit and the soul and the heart.

Then, salvation is whole lot more than just joining a religious organization. I've heard people say to young people: “Don't you think it's about time you join the church?” Well, a man's got no business joining any religious organization except he comes to that conviction by faith.

“Don't you think it's about time that you join the church and make a profession of religion?” You can profess religion and be a member of every church in the town and not have a relationship with God.

WHAT IS THE MISSING NOTE IN PRESENT DAY PREACHING?

JOHN 16:7-11 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Unfortunately, many people whose names are on the church roll books do not know God and have no saving relationship with God. Salvation; what is salvation? It is a living union with the living Lord that is affected by the Holy Spirit.

Salvation; Christ said: *“I am the true vine and you are the branches. I’m the head and you are the body.”* Salvation is a living union with a living God which is affected by the Spirit of the living God.

And salvation is a new birth. It’s the birth of a new creature. It’s the birth of a new person begotten by the supernatural power of God almighty.

When the angel told Mary that she would have a child; she said, *“this can’t be; I don’t have a husband, I don’t know a man.”* And the Lord said to her, *“The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee. The power of the highest shall overshadow thee and that life which shall be conceived or begotten in you shall be called the Son of God.”*

And this same thing happens to a person who is saved, or what we call “born again.” The power of God comes upon that person, the power of the highest. And that new life is the life of God.

Then, salvation is a heart knowledge. Christ said, *“This is eternal life that they might know thee the only true God.”* It’s to know God. It’s not to know about God or know there is a God, as people say, but it’s to know God and to know Jesus Christ whom God has sent.

That’s revealed by the Holy Spirit. You see, this living union with Christ is affected by the Holy Spirit and this new life is begotten by the Holy Spirit and this right knowledge or heart knowledge of God is revealed by the Holy Spirit.

Then, salvation is the life and nature of God restored in us. We lost the life of God. God said to Adam, *“In the day you eat of the forbidden fruit you shall die.”* And Adam did eat and died and *“death passed upon all men.”*

And when a man is saved, as the Scripture says, or when a man is redeemed and he’s brought back to God by the Spirit of God, that life, spiritual life, is put within him by the power of the Spirit of God.

So, all of this is affected by the Spirit of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ said; *“If I go not away the Holy Spirit will not come. And when the Holy Spirit is come he’s going to do some things. He’s going to glorify me. He’s going to lead you into all truth. He’s going to take the things of mine and show them unto you.”*

And this living union with Christ is affected by the Holy Spirit. This new birth is begotten by the Holy Spirit and this heart knowledge is revealed by the Holy Spirit, and this life and nature of God is restored by the Holy Spirit.

WHAT IS THE MISSING NOTE IN PRESENT DAY PREACHING?

JOHN 16:7-11 • HENRY T. MAHAN

So, if a man misses Holy Spirit conviction, if a man misses this regenerating, revealing life giving work of the Holy Spirit, then he's going to miss repentance because Paul said: *"I would have known sin except the law said thou shalt not covet."*

The law came to him in the hands of the Spirit of God and he saw he was a sinner and he repented of his sin. If a man misses repentance he'll miss Christ. You can't turn to Christ unless you turn from your idols. *"No man can serve two masters."*

This is one of the problems today. People are trying to hold onto the world and hold on to God. *"You can't serve two masters." No man can serve God and mammon.* You can't cling to Christ and cling to the enemies of Christ.

And then, if a man misses faith, he's going to miss Christ *"for without faith it's impossible to please God. He that cometh to God must believe that he is. He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life."*

Over in **1 John 5:11** the Scripture says: *"This is the record; God hath given us life and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son of God hath life."*

If you miss Christ you miss life because eternal life is in Christ. He said: *"I know my sheep and I give them eternal life."* He's the source of life. We live because we are in Christ. We are heirs of God because *"we are joint-heirs with Christ."*

We are accepted by God because we are in Christ. We are loved by God because we are in Christ. Everything we have is in Christ. It's all in Him. Eternal life is in Christ.

So, this is the importance of Holy Spirit conviction. This is what's missing in present day preaching. There's no faith without repentance. There's no repentance without conviction. There's no conviction without Holy Spirit power.

There's no Holy Spirit power without God in His purpose sending on purpose His Spirit to do an effectual work. If we miss Holy Spirit conviction and Holy Spirit reproof and the Holy Spirit's work; we are going to miss all of these other things, repentance, faith, Christ, and eternal life.

Do you see the necessity? If I go another way He will not come. The Holy Spirit is the one who convinces the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. Without Him there can be no real conviction, there can be no real conversion. There can be no real knowledge of God.

"Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man the things that God's prepared for them that love him (God is reserved for them that love Him) but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. No man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man that's in him. Even so, no man knoweth the things of God save the Spirit of God and he to whom the Holy Spirit reveals him."

WHAT IS THE MISSING NOTE IN PRESENT DAY PREACHING?

JOHN 16:7-11 • HENRY T. MAHAN

We are missing Holy Spirit conviction. We are missing Holy Spirit revelation. We are missing Holy Spirit conception and begetting. We are missing that Holy Spirit life which is bestowed and restored only by His power. Do you see the importance of it?

But, Holy Spirit conviction of sin is not the goal. We are not trying to get to Holy Spirit conviction. This is a mistake; this is a mistake to try to make Holy Spirit conviction the goal and the end of our preaching.

Holy Spirit conviction of sin and Holy Spirit revelation and Holy Spirit regeneration is a means to bring you to Christ. The Holy Spirit never speaks of Himself. He doesn't brag on Himself. He doesn't make men content only to know Him or to partake of His power.

Our Lord said: *"When he the Holy Spirit is come he shall not speak of himself."* I will tell you this; when you hear people always talking about "the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost;" be careful, the Holy Ghost if he's present talks about Christ, always about Christ.

"He shall not speak of himself. He shall glorify me." The Holy Spirit doesn't glorify the gifts. He doesn't glorify tongues or healing or miracles. He doesn't glorify men. He doesn't glorify Himself; He glorifies Christ. *"He takes the things of Christ."*

And I warn you don't be taken up with the means. Holy Spirit conviction is the means to bring us to Christ, the person of Christ, to enjoy Christ, to believe on Christ, to know Christ, to partake of Christ, to walk with Christ, to praise Christ, to thank Christ, to preach Christ, to trust Christ and to rest in Christ.

That's the Holy Spirit's work. He is a means and His work is a means to bring men to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. You stop short of Christ then that's not the Holy Spirit working in you; that's some other spirit.

John tells us in **1 John 4:1** to, *"Try the spirits, whether they be of God for many false prophets (preachers) have gone out into this world."* A man's got to be brought to Christ. If he stops short of faith in Christ, and resting in Christ, and a knowledge of Christ, he will miss redemption and he will miss eternal life.

Now, it doesn't matter; a man may be a chosen vessel unto God like Saul of Tarsus. Saul was a chosen vessel unto God but Saul wasn't saved until he came to do business with Jesus Christ, until he came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, until he came to embrace and receive as his Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

And when Saul of Tarsus was converted and went out to preach; he didn't preach his experience. He didn't preach Holy Spirit conviction; he preached Christ. He said: *"I'm determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."*

Now, a man may tremble before the holy law of God as Israel did at Sinai and not be saved because most of Israel didn't know God. They just trembled before the law. They knew right

WHAT IS THE MISSING NOTE IN PRESENT DAY PREACHING?

JOHN 16:7-11 • HENRY T. MAHAN

from wrong and they knew they were wrong. But, a man may tremble before the holy law of God and still not be saved until he comes to know Christ.

And then, a man may hear the true prophet of God like Herod. Herod heard John the Baptist. He couldn't have heard a better preacher. And he did many things and he feared John and he respected John and he felt bad when he put John to death.

But he didn't come to Christ. He did not come to Christ. He heard John and he did many wonderful things you know, but he didn't know Christ.

And like the Ethiopian Eunuch over there; he was reading the Scriptures, studying the Scriptures. He had been to Jerusalem. He had been there to worship God but he didn't know Christ.

When Phillip got up into the chariot with him he didn't ask him if he wanted to be baptized with the Holy Ghost or if he wanted to receive the gift of tongues or if he wanted to receive the gift of healing or if he wanted his pocketbook filled; *"he started at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus Christ;"* and that man came to a saving knowledge of the Son of God.

And then a man may undergo deep, personal, conviction of sin as the Publican in the temple. He knew he was a sinner. *"He smote upon his breast and he cried: God be merciful to me the sinner."*

But that man had to come to rest in Christ. We must not stop short of a willing, loving, continuing faith, in the Lord Jesus Christ because only Christ can justify you before God and that by His righteousness and His substitutionary death.

Only Jesus Christ can cleanse you of sin. The Holy Spirit can't do it, the Bible can't do it, the waters of baptism can't do it, the bread and wine at the Lord's Table can't do it, moral reformation can't do it, and the preacher and evangelist can't do it; only Christ can cleanse you. *"The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin."* And His is the only blood that can.

Don't stop short of Christ because only Christ can free you from the curse of the law, from the penalty of sin, from the power of sin, from the practice of sin, and from the dominion of sin. Only Christ can speak peace to your troubled heart.

He said: *"You come to me; I will give you rest."* Christ is the only one who can give you rest. Don't come to anyone else or anything else. Don't come to a doctrine, to a religious position; come to a Person. He said: *"My peace I give unto you."*

And then only Christ can make you accepted before the Father: *"We are accepted in the beloved."* Only Christ can intercede for you, *"He ever liveth to make intercession for you."*

Our Lord said: *"It's expedient for you that I go away."* What's He talking about? What's He saying here? The disciples didn't understand. He said: *"It's expedient for you that I go away."*

WHAT IS THE MISSING NOTE IN PRESENT DAY PREACHING?

JOHN 16:7-11 • HENRY T. MAHAN

In these verses and other verses when Christ speaks of going away He is talking about His death: *“The Son of man must go to Jerusalem and suffer and die. The Son of man must be lifted up. The Son of man must suffer these persecutions, he must.”*

His going away is necessary for us because:

First of all: He goes to open the way for us into the Holiest, by a new and living way that, *“we might come boldly before God’s throne of grace to find mercy and grace to help in time of need”*

He goes to open the way for us into the Holy of Holies by His blood (a new and living way). He goes to take possession of heaven for you and me.

He goes to the Father’s right hand to intercede for us. He goes to the right hand of God to make an effectual atonement for you and for me and to transact all the saving business between us and the living God.

It’s necessary! Christ said, *“It is expedient for you that I go away, I must.”* For He says: *“If I go not away, (if I do not die on the cross, if I do not suffer on Calvary, if I’m not buried, if I do not rise again, if I do not ascend to the right hand of the Father, if I don’t die on the cross) the Comforter will not come, the Holy Spirit will not come.”*

There will be no conviction of sin. There will be no conviction of righteousness and of judgment. This is a fact and well known to those who know anything about God’s righteousness and God’s justice.

If Christ does not honor God’s law, if Christ does not satisfy God’s justice, if Christ does not bear our sins in His own body on the tree and die for us, then the Holy Spirit will not come. Why not, because He wouldn’t have any Gospel to reveal? The Gospel is Christ and Him crucified. So, the Holy Spirit wouldn’t have any Gospel to reveal if He did come.

And then again, He would have no salvation to apply. There would be no redemption. Christ redeemed us by His blood. And if Christ go not away, there would be no sprinkling of blood.

You know, Moses and Aaron gave us a type of Christ’s blood being sprinkled in that they sprinkle the book and they sprinkle the altar, they sprinkle the people, and they sprinkle the tabernacle.

Under the law almost all things were purged by blood. *“Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.”* Our God said, *“When I see the blood I will pass over you.”*

I hear people who criticize preachers who preach about the blood. Now, you listen to me a minute. I hear people who say, “I don’t want anything to do with your slaughter-house bloody religion.”

WHAT IS THE MISSING NOTE IN PRESENT DAY PREACHING?

JOHN 16:7-11 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Now wait a minute! Blood is a precious thing. The only reason that I can stand up here right now and breathe is that I've got blood flowing through these veins. Blood; it is, "*the life of the flesh is in the blood.*" Blood's precious. Let's don't be too critical of blood.

And I'll tell you this, if your dear son or daughter is in an automobile accident tonight; (I've seen this so many times) and you go up to the hospital to visit them in the Emergency Room, do you know what you'll see hanging over their bed?

You will see a precious red liquid in a bottle. And down through the stream, down through that channel (or that tube) will come that precious red liquid. And the doctor will say to you, "We've already given three pints." And you will say, "Thank God for the blood." He lives by the blood." Now come on now!

And I'll tell you this; we've had some wars that kept our freedom. You and I enjoy the freedom of the United States of America. That freedom was bought with blood; that's right, blood bought that freedom.

I had a boy killed in Vietnam. I know something about boys dying in the service, dying and fighting for freedom. I was there myself in World War II. My daddy was in World War I. My first cousin was the first boy killed in World War II.

Our freedom was bought by blood and the freedom of the future will be bought by blood. And your spiritual life was bought. Blood's a precious, precious, precious, substance.

And you will sit down and eat; you will sit down and eat some meat at your dinner table tomorrow and some animal shed its blood that you might have something to eat. So, let's don't be too haughty here about the blood and bloody preaching and "slaughter-house religion" let us be honest about this thing. "*It's the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.*"

I will tell you the most precious blood, beyond that blood that flows in your veins and beyond that blood that saves the life of your child and beyond that blood that bought our freedom is the blood of our Lord, the blood of God that was shed on the cross to cleanse my sins and your sins, His blood atonement.

The Holy Spirit; He wouldn't have any blood to sprinkle upon the doorpost and the lintel of your heart if Christ doesn't die. "*If I go not away the Holy Spirit will not come,*" because He would have no righteousness to reveal. He would have no comfort to give. My only comfort and assurance of forgiveness of life is because Christ died.

And then He says: "*And when the Holy Spirit is come.*" ("*I am going away to give my life a ransom for many*"). When the Holy Spirit is come; He's going to have something to bring.

He's going to have a gift of life to bring. He's going to have a Gospel of Christ. He's going to have blood to sprinkle. He's going to have good news to tell. He's going to have a

WHAT IS THE MISSING NOTE IN PRESENT DAY PREACHING?

JOHN 16:7-11 • HENRY T. MAHAN

righteousness to reveal. He's going to have a message to bring. And He's going to come and He's going to "*convince this world of sin.*" That's where it starts.

A man will never flee to Christ until he knows he needs Him. A man will never cry for mercy until he's a guilty sinner. A man will never cry for help until he finds out he's lost and he's dying.

So, what is conviction of sin? Well, I can best define it I think by talking of what it's not and then briefly of what it is. Conviction of sin is not just a troubling of my conscience; that's not Holy Spirit conviction.

A man can be troubled in his conscience without the Holy Spirit having anything to do with it because, "*there's a light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*" Every man by nature has some knowledge of right and wrong.

And then, Holy Spirit conviction of sin is not just a head knowledge of what the law says about sin. You know what the law says and I do too: "*Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not lie and thou shalt not steal.*" You know that; that's not Holy Spirit conviction.

And Holy Spirit conviction is not just to be convinced that men ought not sin. Everybody knows that men ought not sin. I think the whole world is aware of the fact that a fellow ought not to kill another one and a fellow ought not to get drunk and a fellow ought not lie on folks. I think everybody knows that.

Well, what is Holy Spirit conviction?

First of all: It is to personally (myself, because Holy Spirit deals with individuals) feel and experience the bitterness and wretchedness of my sin!

You know it's one thing to know that vinegar is sour because you have read about it; it's another thing to taste it and find it out by experience. And this is what Holy Spirit conviction of sin is, it is to find out by experience the depths of my depravity and the depths of my inability and the depths of my guilt.

It's to find out that experience; it's to feel my sin and to experience my sins and to weep over and grieve over my personal transgressions and iniquities against a Holy God.

Secondly: Holy Spirit conviction; it's a real sense of the fact that my sins are against God, not just against my neighbor!

You say: "I've done someone wrong." Well, that's not Holy Spirit conviction. Holy Spirit conviction is to know I've done God wrong. David said: "*Lord God, against thee and thee only have I sinned.*"

WHAT IS THE MISSING NOTE IN PRESENT DAY PREACHING?

JOHN 16:7-11 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Oh yes; my sins, my faults, my bad judgment, my unkind words are against men. But indirectly, all of them are against God, all of them are against God. Most people feel like they've wronged other people, but sin is against God.

It's a violation of God's government. It's a violation of God's kingdom. It's a violation of God's law, you see. He is the authority of the whole universe, the King of the whole universe.

And a violation by me in thought, word or deed, is not just against some other person; it's against God. It's a rebellion against God's right to rule over me.

Thirdly: Then Holy Spirit conviction of sin is something else; it's a conviction of the righteousness of God in judging and condemning me!

David said; read **Psalms 51**; that's Holy Spirit conviction. "*O God; my sins are ever before me. Have mercy upon me. Against thee only have I sinned.*" And this; he said: "*And I know that my sins are against you and you are right to condemn me and you are just to judge me.*"

Now, I will say this to you: "*I've sinned and come short of God's glory.*" If God condemns me and casts me into hell; I will get what I deserve and God will be right. That's real Holy Spirit conviction. It's like Job said: "*Behold; I am vile. I abhor myself. I repent in sackcloth and ashes.*"

Now, when we are brought to that place we will look for help. Where will we look for help? We will look for help to Him and only Him who can give it, Christ our Substitute, Christ our Lord!