

# An Exegesis of John 16:5-16

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By Pastor Michael R. Riley

## Introduction

It is Maundy Thursday evening. In a few short hours, Jesus will be arrested, tried, wrongly convicted and crucified. Already this evening Jesus has told the disciples that one of them will betray him. He has told Peter, the ostensible leader of the disciples, that he will deny Jesus, not once, not twice, but three times that very evening. Despite all their protests, Jesus is determined to go to the cross. Being committed to this course of action Jesus spends the night preparing the disciples for the inevitable. Even after three years of instruction at his feet, the disciples are still weak in their understanding of Jesus' work. They still do not understand the fact that Jesus must be crucified and rise again on the third day. They hear the Lord telling them that he must leave, yet they do not comprehend where he is going. Furthermore, Jesus has just warned them of impending persecution—persecution he had not told them about at the beginning since he had been with them. And now he says he is leaving.

In this situation it isn't hard to understand the sorrow the disciples feel. And yet sorrow is the last thing that Jesus wanted the disciples to feel on that first Maundy Thursday. Instead of sorrow, they should be filled with joy! Their Savior was about to reach the pinnacle of his ministry by completing his work of salvation. Still, the disciples' weakness in understanding blinded them to the joy the cross would bring. In the text before us Jesus rebukes the disciples' sorrow and focuses them instead on the promise of the Spirit.

## Commentary

### Verse 5

νῦν δὲ ὑπάγω πρὸς τὸν πέμψαντά με, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐρωτᾷ με, Ποῦ ὑπάγεις;

νῦν - "now"

δε - begins a new but related thought, "but"

ὑπάγω - 1<sup>st</sup> person, singular, present active indicative of ἀπαγω "I am going, returning"

πρὸς - to

τὸν πέμψαντά - aorist active participle of πέμπω, accusative singular masculine, attributive use: "the one who sent"

με - "me" direct object

καὶ - "and, yet"

οὐδεὶς - "not one"

ἐξ ὑμῶν - "of you" partitive genitive

ἐρωτᾷ - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present active indicative of ἐρωτάω, "he asks"

με - "me" direct object

Ποῦ - "where?"

ὑπάγεις - 2<sup>nd</sup> person, singular, present active indicative of ἀπαγω "are you going"

*Translation: But now I am returning to him who sent me, yet not one of you asks me, "Where are you going?"*

In the verse just preceding our text, Jesus said, “I did not tell you this at first because I was with you.” Now, however, that situation has changed, Jesus will no longer be with his disciples in the same way he has been. Thus, Jesus begins a new but related thought (δέ). The past tense in the previous verse was not a mistake; Jesus was now leaving the disciples to return to the one who had sent him (τὸν πέμψαντά με).

This last statement is an obvious reference to the Father, but there is far more to it than that. Jesus had previously talked about returning to his Father (cf. 14:28). Here, however, Jesus focuses on the actions of the Father. He is the one *who sent Jesus*. This name identifies the Father, not as Creator, not as Judge, but as the One who reveals himself by sending his Logos, his Word, his One and Only Son into the world. In 15:21, the reason the world persecutes the disciples is that they do not know the Father as τὸν πέμψαντά με, the One who sent me, the One who revealed himself in lowliness, in the incarnation, the One whose Word took flesh.

The people of the world will acknowledge a Creator, One who gives the law, One who rewards the good man and punishes the bad. But they refuse, they always refuse, to know τὸν πέμψαντά με, the One who condescends to send his Son into the world, to save the world by Christ’s lowliness, humiliation, and defeat. The world wants a God who sends a Master, and rejects the One Who Sends His Son as Servant. The *opinio legis* needs a Creator and loves the One who gives law. It hates the God who sends his Son to suffer and die; it hates the foolishness of the cross. That is why John quotes Jesus on so many different occasions, saying things like “No one comes to the Father except through me.” For it is not at Eden or at Sinai we find out the heart and nature of God. Eden and Sinai are stumbling blocks to some, but not *The* stumbling block. We find that at Calvary.

This is why the concepts of “pre-evangelism,” “preparing people for the Gospel by addressing their felt needs,” and “finding those who are receptive to the Gospel,” are useless at best and harmful at worst. To the extent that they seek to obscure or mute the offense of the cross—and at their best they are deafeningly silent about the cross—these methods are not “pre-evangelism.” They are “non-evangelism,” because they feed people’s *opinio legis* instead of dwelling on the scandal of the cross. “Evangelism,” in the true sense of the term, does not seek to get people into a building where, they are told, God will solve their personal problems, make their day better, their marriage richer, or assuage their loneliness. For these things identify God as the Sovereign Powerful One, The Magic Fixer, The One Who Helps Us Evade the Temporal Results of Sin. All these the world welcomes. “Evangelism,” however, identifies God as τὸν πέμψαντά με —the One Who Sends His Son. He sent him, not to improve this world, but to go and prepare a new one; not to end human suffering, but to suffer with and for us; not to judge the world, but to save it; not to administer justice, but to show mercy. The Father sent Jesus for a purpose: to redeem a world of sinners.

In referring to the Father in this way Jesus attempts to focus the disciples’ attention on his work and its completion which should be a matter of great joy for them. He was returning to the one who had sent him because his work was now drawing to a close. Soon he would conquer sin, death and hell. Soon he would be exalted to the right hand of God the Father. Jesus’ leaving meant a lot for the disciples.

Still, they showed little interest in *what* it meant. In chapters 13 and 14 they had expressed their concern with where Jesus was going, but only in how it related to their following him. Peter had asked why he couldn’t follow Jesus immediately and Thomas had asked how they were to follow when they didn’t know the way. But none of them had asked *where* Jesus was going. None of them had asked what it all meant that Jesus was returning to the one who had sent him. What should have been a matter of great joy for them filled them instead with grief.

## Verse 6

ἀλλ’ ὅτι ταῦτα λελάληκα ὑμῖν ἢ λύπη πεπλήρωκεν ὑμῶν τὴν καρδίαν.

ἀλλ’ - “but, rather, on the contrary” strong adversative

ὅτι - causal “because”

ταῦτα - “these things”

λελάληκα - 1<sup>ST</sup> person, singular, perfect active indicative of λαλέω “I have said/told”

ὑμῖν - indirect object, “to you”

ἡ λύπη - “grief, sorrow, pain” articularized to emphasize quality, subject of the clause

πεπλήρωκεν - 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular, perfect active indicative of πληρόω “it has filled”

ὑμῶν - possessive genitive, “your”

τὴν καρδίαν - direct object, “heart”

*Translation: Rather, because I have said these things to you, grief has filled your hearts.*

Rather than asking Jesus what his leaving meant for them, the disciples allowed their pain and sorrow to overwhelm them. Jesus points this out by using ἀλλά, this strong adversative highlights the fact that the disciples’ reaction is exactly the opposite of what it should have been. Jesus’ words should have filled them with happiness and joy; instead, they had filled (πεπλήρωκεν) their hearts right to the brim with grief and sorrow. The article on λύπη emphasizes the quality of the noun. How odd that Jesus’ words, words intended to strengthen the disciples and fill them with joy, should result in grief! Asking where he is going is the *opposite* of being filled with grief, as far as Jesus is concerned. Jesus’ state of humiliation is soon to end.

Rather than dwell on this brief rebuke, however, Jesus chooses to emphasize the good that comes from his returning to the one who sent him. He will not allow the disciples to wallow in sorrow and self-pity; instead, he lifts up their eyes to the promise of the Spirit.

### **Verse 7**

ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγω ὑμῖν, συμφέρει ὑμῖν ἵνα ἐγὼ ἀπέλθω. ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ ἀπέλθω, ὁ παράκλητος οὐκ ἐλεύσεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς· ἐὰν δὲ πορευθῶ, πέμψω αὐτὸν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

ἀλλ’ - “but, rather, on the contrary” strong adversative

ἐγὼ - “I”, emphasis on Jesus who is truth

τὴν ἀλήθειαν - “The Truth,” article is qualitative, cf. John 14:6.

λέγω - 1<sup>st</sup> person, singular, present active indicative of λέγω “I tell, I say”

ὑμῖν - “to you”, indirect object

συμφέρει - 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular, present active indicative of συμφέρω “it is better, it is to one’s advantage”

ὑμῖν - “for you”, dative of advantage

ἵνα - “that”

ἐγὼ - “I”, again emphasizes Christ, this time in contrast to the Holy Spirit

ἀπέλθω - 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, aorist active subjunctive from ἀπέρχομαι “I should go away”

ἐὰν - “if”, protasis of a present general conditional clause

γὰρ - “for,” gives the explanation for the preceding clause

μὴ - “not”

ἀπέλθω - 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, aorist active subjunctive from ἀπέρχομαι “I do [not] go away”

ὁ παράκλητος - “the Paraclete, Advocate, Helper” cf. John 14:16-17.

οὐκ - “not”

ἐλεύσεται - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, future middle (deponent) indicative of ἔρχομαι “he will [not] come”

πρὸς - “to”

ὑμᾶς - “you”

ἐάν - “if”, protasis of a present general conditional clause

δὲ - “but”, introduces an alternate thought

πορευθῶ - 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, aorist passive (deponent) subjunctive of πορεύομαι “I go/leave”

πέμψω - 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, future active indicative of πέμπω “I will send”

αὐτόν - “him” the Spirit

πρὸς - “to”

ὑμᾶς - “you”

*Translation: But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I should go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you, but if I do go, I will send him to you.*

Instead of being filled up with sorrow, the disciples should have been filled with joy at Jesus’ departure. In chapter 14 he had already given them one reason, “If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father.” Here in 16 he gives them another. Beginning with the strong adversative ἀλλά Jesus firmly contradicts the sorrow that has filled the disciples’ hearts.

First, he draws their attention to himself (ἐγώ). Their Lord is speaking, and what he says is the truth (τὴν ἀλήθειαν). Now this is very important. Jesus *is* The Truth; he calls himself The Truth in 14:6. He is The Truth for more than the simple fact that what he says is true. He is The Truth because all truth emanates from him. And now he, who is truth incarnate, assures the disciples that he is telling the truth. For Jesus this is far more than a simple statement that he is not lying, rather it is akin to a vow. Jesus here is promising the disciples that what follows is true in every detail, and the reason he does so is that what he will tell them is so difficult for them to believe.

Jesus tells them that it is better for them that he should go away. In fact, he emphasizes this by using ἐγώ again. How can this be? How can the disciples be better off without Jesus’ physical presence than they are with it? Jesus himself explains with two conditional clauses, both of them present general conditions. The γὰρ at the beginning shows that Jesus now intends to show how it will be better for the disciples for him to leave.

He begins with a negative condition: “If I don’t go away, the Advocate will not come to you.” Now there are several points that need to be made. First of all we are reminded of what Jesus is talking about by his “going away.” Earlier he had referred to it in terms of returning to the one who had sent him, i.e. the completion of his work here on earth which ultimately culminates in his returning to Father in the ascension. If Jesus had not completed his work; if he had not been fully exalted, our status before God would be unchanged. We could not have been justified and thus would have had no opportunity for heaven. Thus Jesus’ point rings true. If he had not completed his work of salvation, the Advocate would not have come. The Holy Spirit would have had no reason to come to us. He would have nothing to give us, no reason to abide with us.

At this point perhaps it would be good to tackle the word παράκλητος. Certainly the translators of the King James Version did us no favors by merely transliterating this word. Kittel says that the word is often used

in a courtroom setting and refers to the advocate pleading his client's cause. This may seem strange since most often we speak of Christ in the position of interceding for the sinner and defending him before the throne of God. It would not be wrong, however, to speak of the Holy Spirit in this same way since Scripture itself does. For example, Paul writes, "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express." In this particular instance the Spirit is defending the disciples, but not by interceding for them with the Father, but instead by convicting the world, a courtroom image. So the Spirit becomes the disciples' Advocate in their case against the world. He obtains a conviction against the world on behalf of the disciples. This too lends credence to the thought of *παράκλητος* as "Advocate."

Unfortunately, "Advocate" used in a purely judicial sense seems a bit narrow in scope, especially in a context where the Spirit's work is described not only as convicting the world, but also guiding the disciples into all truth. Again Kittel says, "If we are to avoid 'Paraclete,' the basic thought is that of 'Advocate' but the more general 'Supporter' or 'Helper' is perhaps the best rendering."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the best understanding of the term, however, would be that the Spirit is a "go-between, intermediary, intercessor." This certainly would include the function of an advocate, but in more than a simple judicial sense. The basic idea seems to be that the Spirit is the one who "greases the wheels" between two parties, closing distance, overcoming barriers or obstacles that might keep two parties from communicating or having a "meeting of the minds." The etymology of the word seems to help in this case—he "calls alongside" two who are separated.

When the Spirit was poured out on God's people at Pentecost, the first thing he did was overcome a barrier that prevented communication or a meeting of minds—in that case, between the disciples and the crowd—the different languages. This is why he is the One who is associated with the Word—a word is that which bridges the communication gap and brings the mind of one person to another. "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, *because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.*" "Comforter" would then be a derivative meaning when the Spirit is coming from God to us, because he brings us the Word of Christ, the Gospel, which is a comforting word. "Counselor" in a similar sense. "Advocate" when he goes to the Father pleading our case, removing obstacles or barriers in our relationship with him, as Paul describes him overcoming our ignorance of how and what to pray in Romans 8:26-27 quoted above. Context, then, must determine whom he is representing and to whom he is speaking, since in the Upper Room discourse it can be either Christ's/the Father's paraclete to us, or our paraclete before him.

The second conditional clause contrasts with the first. If Jesus does go, he will send the Advocate. Notice who is doing the sending. In Jesus' state of humiliation, the Father is the One Who Sends the Advocate, Jesus. When the glorified Jesus ascends to the Father's right hand, however, *he* is "the One Who Sends the Advocate," the Holy Spirit. That is why Jesus said that he would ask the Father to "give you *another* Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth." (14:16-17). Jesus was the first Advocate, the Father the first One Who Sends. The Spirit is another Advocate, and both the Father and Jesus are spoken of as the One Who Sends.

The benefit that accrues to the disciples (and us all) from this sending is clear from our previous discussion. If Jesus does go, he will accomplish his work, our salvation. That fact alone should prove to the disciples that it is best that Jesus go. But Jesus gives them even more reason to believe this truth: if he goes he will then send the Holy Spirit to continue Jesus' work among us. That continuing work of the Spirit, all by itself should have been enough to convince the disciples that it was best that Jesus go. One look at the change that overcomes the disciples between Maundy Thursday and Pentecost, less than two months, demonstrates the power and effectiveness of the Spirit's work in the disciples. All at once they were transformed. They turned from cowering to boldly proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. All as the result of the Holy Spirit's work, a work that would not have been done had Jesus given in to their desires and remained with the disciples in a physical manner.

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<sup>1</sup> Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume*, p. 784

## Verse 8

καὶ ἔλθὼν ἐκεῖνος ἐλέγξει τὸν κόσμον περὶ ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ περὶ κρίσεως·

καὶ - “and”

ἐλθὼν - aorist active participle from ε ρ χ ο πα ι, nominative plural masculine, circumstantial temporal use  
“when he comes”

ἐκεῖνος - “that one” the Spirit

ἐλέγξει - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, future active indicative of ἐλέγχω several shades of meaning: to show (error or fault); to convince (of error or fault); to show something for what it is; to prove guilty; to condemn; to rebuke or reprove. Kittel, p. 222, “to show people their sins and summon them to repentance.” περί is used to denote the fault/sin.

τὸν κόσμον - “the world”

περὶ - “in regard to; with respect to” denotes the particular fault which is exposed by a X, a yx c0.

ἁμαρτίας - “sin”, “missing the mark” picture is one of falling short and focuses on the nature of the act especially stressing guilt.

καὶ - “and” second in the series

περὶ - “in regard to; with respect to” denotes the particular fault which is exposed by.

δικαιοσύνης - “righteousness” in this case the righteousness that God demands.

καὶ - “and” third in the series

περὶ - “in regard to; with respect to” denotes the particular fault which is exposed by.

κρίσεως - “judgement” particularly God’s judgement on this sinful world

*Translation: And when he comes he will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement.*

The work of the Holy Spirit is Jesus’ next point. With a circumstantial temporal participle, Jesus points to the coming of the Holy Spirit which starts with Pentecost and extends to the end of the world. The work of the Holy Spirit is bound up in one word: ἐλέγξει. Perhaps the best translation of this word would be some combination of convict and convince. Kittel feels that the base meaning of the word as it is used in the New Testament is “to show people their sins and summon them to repentance.”<sup>2</sup> However, the implication of such a meaning is that the summons will always work. It certainly cannot be said that the entire world has been brought to repentance, nor will it be. Rather the Spirit’s work is to convict/convince. Some he convinces/convicts in the manner spoken of by Kittel, where sinners are brought to repentance and turn in faith to Jesus for forgiveness. Others he convicts and that conviction works a hardening of the heart. Rather than bringing the sinner to repentance, the conviction of the Holy Spirit drives him away, leading him to the final conviction pronounced over every unbeliever on Judgement Day.

Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will convict the world (τὸν κόσμον). Who does this include? There are really only two possible options, either τὸν κόσμον refers to all people, believers and unbelievers alike, as it does in John 3:16, or it refers only to the unbelieving world as in John 15:18. When one looks at the context it would seem that the latter would be the preferred understanding. Just before this section (15:8) Jesus clearly refers to the unbelieving world when he says “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.” Shortly after this section (16:20) Jesus again uses it with the same connotation when he says, “I tell you the truth, you will

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<sup>2</sup> Kittel, p. 222

weep and mourn while the world rejoices.” Does that then mean that the following description of the Holy Spirit’s work is restricted only to his work of hardening? Certainly not. In chapter 15 Jesus talks about how his disciples had once been part of that world that hates him when he says “As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world.” Certainly they had to have been a part of the world to be chosen out of it. So also, the work of the Holy Spirit spoken of here includes not only his hardening of those who refuse to believe, but his work of calling people out of the world and to faith as well.

That work will be accomplished, Jesus says, in three respects. The preposition *περὶ* is used to denote the sin which *ἐλέγχω* brings to light. Jesus first lists the three: sin (*ἁμαρτίας*), righteousness (*δικαιοσύνης*), and judgement (*κρίσεως*). The fact that Jesus repeats the *περὶ* with each noun indicates that he is not thinking of any sort of a hierarchy among these words, each is of equal importance. The first of these three, *ἁμαρτίας*, is the well-known picture word referring to our missing the mark or falling short of the mark. The second *δικαιοσύνης*, refers to the righteousness that God requires of us. And the third, *κρίσεως*, speaks of our standing before the judgement seat of God. It is in these three specific areas that the Holy Spirit will convict the world, bringing some to repentance and forgiveness and hardening the rest.

Jesus explains just exactly how the Holy Spirit will convict the world in each of these areas in the following verses.

## Verse 9

*περὶ ἁμαρτίας μὲν, ὅτι οὐ πιστεύουσιν εἰς ἐμέ·*

*περὶ ἁμαρτίας* - Jesus will now elaborate on each of areas mentioned first, “with regard to sin”

*μὲν* - typical *μὲν...δέ* construction except here there are two *δέ*’s following. Thus instead of “on the one hand...and on the other” perhaps “first...second...third” or they may be left untranslated.

*ὅτι* - “because”

*οὐ* - “not”

*πιστεύουσιν* - 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, future active indicative of *πιστεύω* “they will [not] believe”

*εἰς* - “in”

*ἐμέ* - “me”

*Translation: First, in regard to sin, because they will not believe in me;*

Jesus now moves on to explain the three areas in which the Holy Spirit will convict the world. It is vital to understand the common denominator that links the three items sin, righteousness, and judgement. As Jesus defines them in 9, 10, and 11, all three are *invisible*.

First, he says, the Holy Spirit will convict/convince the world in regard to sin. The causal *ὅτι* here serves to point out specifically what it is that convicts the world. In regard to sin, what convicts the world is the fact that they will not believe in Jesus. The fact of the matter is that the sins of all mankind have been paid for in full. Jesus took the full brunt of God’s wrath against sinners while he was on the cross. There is absolutely no need now for anyone to be condemned. However that objective fact finds no subjective residence in the heart of the world, with the result that the world stands convicted and condemned. In effect the world, by its refusal to believe says to God: “I don’t care what Jesus did, and I don’t want what Jesus did, I want to do it myself.” In its arrogance the world chooses to reject Jesus’ work and looks to its own devices for justification.

The Holy Spirit’s work is to confront the world with the terrible truth of its unbelief. When we think of sin, we think of murder, adultery, theft, etc. But the sin is invisible, undetectable—the sin against the first

commandment, unbelief. No other sin matters. The key to solid, Scriptural preaching of the Law is always, always, always to do what Luther did in the explanations to the commandments. “We should fear and love God...” is simply the repetition of the first commandment in the following nine. The heart and core of sin is to reject the crucified Christ, to reject God’s own coming to us. And every time we sin, we really reveal that we do not believe him when he declares that we do not belong to the world, that we are not of the world (15:19), that we have died to sin with him and are now alive to God in him. This death and resurrection, Paul tells us, is an accomplished fact, not merely a future hope (Romans 6:5-11).

The Holy Spirit shows the unbeliever that his refusal to believe in Jesus leaves him in his sin. The Spirit shows the world that it is only by faith that we can be saved, which of course also means that “whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son” (John 3:18). And the result of all this is that the world will stand convicted and, in fact, even now does stand convicted. For some, whom the Spirit will call, that conviction leads to sorrow and prepares the way for the Gospel to bring repentance. But for the rest, that conviction merely hardens them in their unbelief. The assertion that there is no other way to heaven except by faith is scoffed at and the *opinio legis* holds its sway.

### Verse 10

περὶ δικαιοσύνης δέ, ὅτι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ὑπάγω καὶ οὐκέτι θεωρεῖτέ με·

περὶ δικαιοσύνης - “in regard to righteousness”

δέ - “second”

ὅτι - “because”

πρὸς - “to”

τὸν πατέρα - “the Father”

ὑπάγω - 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, present active indicative, “I am going/returning”

καὶ - “and”

οὐκέτι - “no longer”

θεωρεῖτέ - 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural, present active indicative (other possibilities: imperfect indicative and present imperative) of θεωρέω “you will [no longer] see/observe”

με - direct object, “me”

*Translation: second, in regard to righteousness, because I am returning to the Father and you will no longer see me;*

Moving on to the next subject in which the Holy Spirit will convict the world, Jesus now speaks of righteousness. Again the causal ὅτι serves to point out what convicts the world regarding righteousness: Jesus is returning to the Father. The world certainly has its own ideas about righteousness. The unbeliever feels he can nullify his sin by trying harder or making up for his sin. He foolishly thinks that he can even hide his sin, and when all else fails he can fall back on the old standard of excusing his sin by pushing the blame off on others. Man wants to find his righteousness here and now, in himself. Whether it is the full-blown work-righteousness of the Pharisee, the decision theology of the Arminian, or the idea that people can be receptive to the Gospel if we approach them at the right time with a friendly enough smile, man insists on finding some shred of righteousness in this world, in his actions.

But our salvation has nothing to do with us; we cannot even see it. It is a transaction between the Son and the Father, both seated in the heavenly realms, far above all power and authority, and every name that can



be named. *It is a righteousness that is of no “practical” value, because it is righteousness that avails before God, not before man.* “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ (past reality, not future hope), set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is *now hidden* with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, *then* you will also appear with him in glory.” (Colossians 3:1-4).

Our righteousness is invisible, our Savior and Advocate cannot be seen, and both are of no value for this world. We must not be ashamed of the fact that the Gospel we preach is “impractical” for improving life in this world, nor dare we ever promise people that if they will but listen to the Gospel, temporal blessings and the solutions to life’s troubles will follow. “Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things.”

The Holy Spirit reminds the unbeliever that despite the fact that it is invisible and impractical, there is only one righteousness that prevails before God. It does not come from the world and can not be attained by any work of man. The only righteousness that counts for anything in God’s court is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Only the perfect life of Jesus Christ avails for sinners. Righteousness is the state of the sinner whom God acquits, and that righteousness comes by Jesus Christ alone. The proof that this righteousness is accepted by God is evident in the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Paul writes “He was delivered over to death because of our sins and was raised to life *because of* our justification.” Jesus’ resurrection and ascension are the proof positive that Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross and his perfect life of obedience to the Father were acceptable to the Father in heaven as payment for our sins.

So Jesus says, the Holy Spirit will convict the world “in regard to righteousness, *because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer.*” Only with the eyes of faith can we see him there, the “Christ Jesus who died—more than that who was raised to life—is at God’s right hand and is also interceding for us” (Romans 8:34). The world refuses to see the invisible Christ, and sins by its refusal to believe in him. As a result, the Spirit convicts the world, and in so doing vindicates the faith of the disciple. Those unbelievers who are crushed by this message and despair of their own righteousness are pointed by the Holy Spirit to the righteousness that God freely gives them in Christ Jesus. The rest stand convicted in a judicial sense. They reject the only righteousness that avails before God and thus, again, stand condemned.

## Verse 11

περὶ δὲ κρίσεως, ὅτι ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου.

περὶ δὲ κρίσεως - “third, in regard to judgement”

ὅτι - “because”

ὁ ἄρχων - “the ruler”

τοῦ κόσμου τούτου - “of this world”

κέκριται - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, perfect passive indicative of κρίνω “has been judged; has been condemned”

*Translation: and finally in regard to judgement, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.*

Finally, the world will also be convicted in regard to judgement. Again the causal ὅτι points out the fact that what convicts the world in regard to judgement is the fact that Satan stands condemned. The world, apart from the testimony of the Spirit, thinks many things about the judgement. The most prominent is that it will not happen. Peter writes, “in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, ‘Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation” (2 Peter 3:3-4). Such scoffers see the judgement as some fairy-tale bogeyman designed to frighten little children but holding no importance for adults.

The world thinks its prince is winning the victory. Evil flourishes, good is all but vanquished. Christians are few, scattered, hopelessly divided, dreadfully sinful. Instead of an invisible and impractical heavenly

righteousness that comes by the cross, the world demands a visible, tangible, “useful-in-my-daily-life-to-make-me-better” kind of righteousness. And the vast majority of Christendom, unknowingly ashamed of the cross, agrees to make the Gospel the answer to life’s problems. Surely he is winning, or at least holding his own, the prince of this world.

But the world is wrong. The devil is not in the process of winning. He is not even in the process of losing. He has already lost, and already stands condemned. The Spirit simply points the world to its ruler who has already been defeated and now stands condemned. His fate is sealed for all of eternity. In that judgement the world must see its own judgement. If the unbelievers’ ruler has already been judged and found guilty, what will happen to those who follow him? Again the Holy Spirit will, in some, work this conviction so that it prepares the way for the gospel, thus bringing the unbeliever to repent and to turn away from following Satan to follow Christ. In the rest the conviction wrought by the Holy Spirit will harden hearts. The world will reject the Spirit’s work and, hardened in its choice to follow Satan, it will pretend that it is winning and thus share in Satan’s judgement.

## Verse 12

Ἔτι πολλά ὑμῖν λέγειν, ἀλλ’ οὐ δύνασθε βαστάζειν ἄρτι·

Ἔτι - “yet”

πολλά - “many things”

ἔχω - 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, present active indicative “I have”

ὑμῖν - “to you”, indirect object

λέγειν - present active infinitive of λέγω, complimentary to ἔχω, “to tell/say”

ἀλλ’ - “but” strong adversative

οὐ - “not”

δύνασθε - 2<sup>ND</sup> person plural, present middle/passive (deponent) indicative from δύναμαι “you are [not] able”

βαστάζειν - present active infinitive from βαστάζω, complimentary to δύναμαι, “to endure, bear, tolerate” the understood direct object is πολλά from earlier in the verse.

ἄρτι - “now”

*Translation: I still have many things to tell you, but you are not able to bear them now.*

Jesus now, still explaining the fact that it is best for the disciples that he leave and the Holy Spirit be sent, points to a deficiency in the disciples themselves. There is still much that Jesus would tell the disciples. This is not to say that they did not have the bulk of Jesus’ teaching. Instead they have not yet plumbed the depths of that teaching. But now the time is short and the disciples would not be able to bear what Jesus has to tell them. Jesus’ point is to show the disciples a need that they themselves have. They still do not know all that they ought to know, moreover they would not be able to bear the knowledge if Jesus were to tell them.

What could Jesus be referring to? There is little question that included in the things Jesus would like to have told the disciples are the facts concerning his impending death and resurrection. The disciples certainly had been told of this before, but even then they were not able to bear the teaching. They tried to rationalize Jesus’ predictions concerning his death and resurrection, asking themselves what he could have meant, when his words were quite clear. Or, in Peter’s case, they tried to dissuade Jesus from his path. Certainly there were other things that Jesus would have instructed the disciples about that they could not bear, among them the idea that suffering at the hands of the world to testify to the Gospel (16:1-4) is a privilege, not a trial; that an invisible Gospel (vs. 5-8) is the only one worth having; that the cross is the best way for Christ to go on his way to the

Father, and that the cross—both his and ours—is the best way for us to go to him as well. In the end, one has merely to look at the things the disciples were taught by the Holy Spirit to understand what Jesus speaks of here. Those things that they finally understood only after the resurrection and Pentecost; those things that were taught to them by the Spirit are what Jesus is referring to. Again the point is that Jesus is showing them their need so that they might receive with joy the promise of the Holy Spirit.

### Verse 13

ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ τάσῃ· οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ, ἀλλ' ὅσα ἀκούσει λαλήσει, καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν.

ὅταν - “when”, takes a subjunctive

δὲ - “but” slight change in what is being discussed...really a return to the thought of verse 7.

ἔλθῃ - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, aorist active subjunctive from ἔρχομαι, “he comes”

ἐκεῖνος - “that one”

τὸ πνεῦμα - “the Spirit”

τῆς ἀληθείας - “of truth” article stresses the quality “truth” while the genitive attaches that quality to τὸ πνεῦμα.

ὁδηγήσει - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, future active indicative of ὁδηγέω “he will guide/lead” picture is that of a guide who introduces a traveler into an unknown country. (Reinecker/Rogers, p. 254).

ὑμᾶς - direct object, “you”

ἐν - “into”

τῇ ἀληθείᾳ τάσῃ - “all truth” (cf. verse 7)

οὐ - “not”

γὰρ - “for” following is proof of the statement that the Holy Spirit will lead the disciples into all truth.

λαλήσει - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, future active indicative of λαλέω “he will [not] speak”

ἀφ' - “from, by means of

ἑαυτοῦ - “himself”

ἀλλ' - “but”

ὅσα - nominative, plural, neuter; “as much as; as great as; to the degree that”

ἀκούσει - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, future active indicative of ἀκούω “he will hear”

λαλήσει - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, future active indicative of λαλέω “he will speak”

καὶ - “and”

τὰ ἐρχόμενα - present middle/passive (deponent) participle from ἔρχομαι, accusative plural neuter; attributive use of the participle, “that which is coming”

ἀναγγελεῖ - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, future active indicative of ἀναγγέλω “he will tell, proclaim, report”

ὑμῖν - indirect object, “to you”

*Translation: But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak by himself, but he will speak as much as he hears, and he will tell you what is to come.*

There was a solution to the disciples' deficiency: the promised Holy Spirit and Jesus' promise in verse seven (δὲ). Jesus emphasizes the Spirit by drawing all of their attention to him. He is that Helper spoken of earlier (ἐκεῖνος). He is the Spirit of Truth (τῆς ἀληθείας). This last is vital to the disciples understanding of the benefit the Spirit brings as it is vital to our confidence in Scripture. In calling the Holy Spirit, the *Spirit of Truth*, Jesus places the Spirit on the same level as himself. The Spirit will speak with the same authority as Jesus. His words will hold the same power as those of the Father. There will be nothing false in what he says. No concession will be made to accommodate falsehood. No mistakes will be made in any regard; neither factual errors nor historical errors, nor scientific errors will find a home in his words. Even more importantly, he is the Spirit of Truth, that is, of Christ, who is the Truth (14:6). Since he is the Spirit of Christ, he will speak only of Christ.

Jesus says the work of the Spirit, that Advocate whom Jesus would send, will be to guide the disciples into all truth (ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ τάσῃ). Now certainly this includes the Holy Spirit inspiring the authors of the New Testament to write the exact words he wanted written, but it is far more than just that. Jesus had said in 14:26 "the Holy Spirit... will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you." Here in 16:13, the thought is parallel. The Holy Spirit will also instruct the disciples in the Word. He will guide them in their study and make it possible for them to understand and accept the truths of God's Word. Without his help, there was no chance that the disciples, or we for that matter, could ever comprehend Scripture. There might be academic analysis, but no true understanding. At best there could be a superficial understanding of the law and of God's power, but no true understanding of the Gospel. With the Spirit, however, the foolishness of man is revealed as wiser than man's wisdom. With the Spirit, we and the disciples are taught the deep things of God. By his aid and power we are moved to believe and accept those things that otherwise would have been beyond us, those things that we could not bear nor understand.

Jesus' assurances continue. He offers proof (γὰρ) that the Spirit will guide them into all truth by telling the disciples that they need not worry that somehow the teaching they will receive from the Spirit will be different from the teaching that came from Jesus. Instead, the Spirit will not speak from himself (οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει ἑαυτοῦ). Rather the Spirit's teaching will have the same source as Christ's teaching. Jesus' words here concerning the Spirit are reminiscent of what he says about himself in John 8:28, "I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me." Like Jesus the Spirit will speak only what he hears (ἀλλ' ὅσα ἀκούσει λαλήσει). The ὅσα here indicates that, in fact, the Spirit will speak no more and no less than he hears. Nothing will be left out, nothing will be added.

Finally, the Spirit will also tell the disciples what is to come (καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν). This is a matter that was of some concern to the disciples. On numerous occasions they had asked Jesus about what was coming. Jesus answered them in part. Now the Holy Spirit would reveal to them all that God wanted revealed about what would happen. Of course the first example of this that comes to mind is the distant triumph song of Revelation, and yet there are many other sections of Scripture that deal with "what is to come." Paul tells the Thessalonians about the rise and fall of the anti-christ, and about the saints meeting their departed loved ones at Christ's return. He warns Timothy that the day will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine, he tells the Ephesians about the fate of those who died in Christ and what will happen on the last day. Peter also speaks of what is to come and those who will scoff at the idea of Christ's second coming and a final judgement. These things serve as proof that the Spirit will guide them into all truth. For his prophecies will all come true, marking him as God's spokesman.

#### Verse 14

ἐκεῖνος ἐμὲ δοξάσει, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήμψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν.

ἐκεῖνος - “that one”

ἐμὲ - direct object, “me”

δοξάσει - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, future active indicative of “he will glorify/honor”

ὅτι - “because”

ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ - “the ‘from me’ things” “from what is mine (NIV)”

λήμψεται - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, future middle/passive (deponent) indicative from λαμβάνω, “he will receive”

καὶ - “and”

ἀναγγελεῖ - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, future active indicative of ἀναγγέλω “he will tell, proclaim, report”

ὕμῖν - indirect object, “to you”

*Translation: He will glorify me, because he will receive from that which is mine and will tell it to you.*

And as God’s spokesman, Jesus says, the Spirit will glorify Jesus (δοξάσει). Jesus emphasizes the “me” by bringing ἐμὲ to the front of the clause. How will this happen? Jesus says “he will receive from that which is mine and will tell it to you.” So what are these things (ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ) that he will receive? They are all the saving truths embodied in Jesus. The Spirit will be telling the disciples about Jesus and this in turn will, of course, glorify Jesus. Everything that belongs to Jesus, everything there is to know about Jesus is told to us through the Spirit. Ultimately this then refers again to the Holy Spirit’s work of inspiration and his guiding power as he teaches us through Scripture, telling us again and again of Jesus, and in so doing, glorifying Jesus.

## Verse 15

πάντα ὅσα ἔχει ὁ πατὴρ ἐμά ἐστιν· διὰ τοῦτο εἶπον ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λαμβάνει καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν.

πάντα - “all”

ὅσα - nominative, plural, neuter “as much as; as great as; to the degree that”

ἔχει - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present active indicative from ἔχω, “he has”

ὁ πατὴρ - “the Father”

ἐμά - “mine” nominative, plural, neuter adjective agreeing with

ἐστιν - “it is”

διὰ τοῦτο - “therefore, for this reason”

εἶπον - 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, aorist active indicative from “I said, spoke, told”

ὅτι - indirect discourse, “that”

ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ - “from that which is mine”

λαμβάνει - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present active indicative of, “he receives”

καὶ - “and”

ἀναγγελεῖ - 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, future active indicative of “he will tell, proclaim, report”

ὕμῖν - indirect object, “to you”

*Translation: All, as much as the Father has, is mine. For this reason I said that he receives from that which is mine and will tell it to you.*

Jesus now continues by making sure that the disciples do not get the wrong impression from Jesus' emphasis on "mine." It is not as if these things belong exclusively to Jesus apart from the Father. These truths that Jesus speaks of are the Father's as much as they are the Son's. In the mystery of the Trinity, everything that belongs to the Father, also belongs to the Son and the Spirit. The truth that the Spirit conveys, comes to him from the Father and the Son. All three persons of the Trinity share in these truths and in making them our own. Jesus explains that this is the reason he can speak so emphatically about the Spirit receiving these truths from him and sharing them with the disciples.

### **Verse 16**

Μικρὸν καὶ οὐκέτι θεωρεῖτέ με, καὶ πάλιν μικρὸν καὶ ὄψεσθέ με.

Μικρὸν - adjective "a little," χρόνος is understood, so "a little while/time"

καὶ - "and"

οὐκέτι - "no longer"

θεωρεῖτε - 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural, present active indicative from θεωρέω, "you will see"

με - direct object, "me"

καὶ - "and"

πάλιν - "again, once more, yet"

μικρὸν - adjective "a little," is understood, so "a little while/time"

καὶ - "and"

ὄψεσθέ - 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural, future middle/passive (deponent) indicative from, "you will see"

με - direct object, "me"

*Translation: In a little while you will see me no longer, and yet after a little while you will see me.*

Finally, Jesus returns to the subject which had engendered such sorrow in the disciples hearts. He was leaving in a little while. Little did the disciples comprehend the joy that would come from Jesus' departure, for Jesus is speaking specifically here of his death and resurrection. By his death Jesus would conquer sin, death and hell. Despite the sorrow and deep mourning that the disciples would go through as a result of Jesus' crucifixion and death, the day on which Jesus died would ever after be known as Good Friday. Yes, for a short time (μικρὸν) the disciples would not see Jesus, but then on the third day, they would see him again and then their sorrow would turn to joy.

### **Conclusion**

In one respect this text teaches us all a lesson about the goodness of God. The disciples could not understand how Jesus' physical departure could be for their good, but Jesus shows them that it is. We too are tempted to think that things could be better than they are. When negative things happen, whether at home or in our ministries, we too can be filled with sorrow and forget the wonderful truth that even these negative things are happening because God has promised to do what is best for us. If God could take the death of his Son and turn that seemingly tragic event to our greatest good, he can certainly work all other things out for our good.

In another respect this text is a wonderful study on the work of the Holy Spirit. Too often we take that work for granted, not remembering that we are not the ones who lend power to the message we proclaim. We can do nothing to make the Word effective, and frankly, we can do nothing to make that Word ineffective. Its power and effectiveness derive from the Spirit and from him alone. Notice that in our text the Spirit is the one doing the convicting and the guiding. He is the subject, not the disciples. The Word will accomplish what God desires and achieve the purpose for which he sent it, through the power of the Holy Spirit. The only way that we can “hinder” the gospel is by not preaching it. And if we do not preach it, the Lord will see to it that others do, even if he needs to make the rocks to cry out, or a donkey to speak. Our preaching and its quality is not a matter of our making the Word effective, nor even a matter of us not making it ineffective, but rather a matter of our giving our best to the Lord. The Holy Spirit will see to it that sinners are convicted and then either brought to repentance or hardened in their unbelief. The Holy Spirit will see to it that believers are guided into all truth. We are merely his tools for all of this.

#### **Notes on Usage**

This text (with the exception of verse 16) is found in the *Christian Worship* one year pericope as the Gospel for Easter 5. The first part of the text (verses 5-11) is also found in the three year pericope, series A for Pentecost Sunday. The latter part of the text (verses 12-15) is found in series C for Trinity Sunday.